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Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California  
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

Eleanor Wagner

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL COALITIONS:  
ELECTORAL, LEGISLATIVE, AND COMMUNITY

With Introductions by  
Ruth Abraham  
Arthur Carstens  
Samuel Kalish

An Interview Conducted by  
Malca Chall

Copy No. 1





ELEANOR (ELLY) WAGNER



TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Eleanor Wagner

PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTIONS by	
Ruth Abraham	iii
Arthur Carstens	vi
Samuel Kalish	viii
INTERVIEW HISTORY	x
BRIEF BIOGRAPHY	xii
I FAMILY BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, AND EARLY CAREERS IN WORK AND POLITICS	1
The Family	1
Professional Dancer in Hollywood: The Dancers Federation	4
Secretarial Pool at RKO Studios: The Screen Office Employees Guild	10
Additional Family Background	12
II SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT: THE FIRST DECADE, 1946-1956	17
Beginning Political Action	17
Ellis Patterson Write-in Campaign, 1946	19
Affiliation with the California Legislative Conference, 1947-1956	22
Conflicts with the Independent Progressive Party	25
Organization and Functions of CLC	28
Working with the Legislature	29
Effect of the Cold War: The Unions	33
The Loyalty Oath	36
Studying and Reporting on Legislation	39
Campaigns on Selected Issues	45
Some Leaders of the CLC	48
More on Financing the CLC	51
Final Years of the CLC	52
Evaluation of the Woman's Role	54
III INTERIM EXPERIENCES: POLITICS AND BUSINESS, 1955-1962	62
The Bellevue Democratic Club	62
Construction Enterprise	65



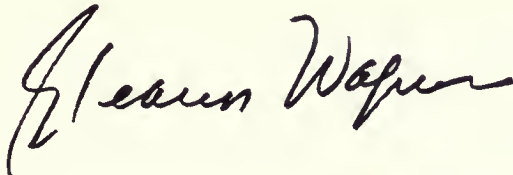
IV	SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT: THE SECOND DECADE, 1962-1972	67
	Affiliation with Californians for Liberal Representation	67
	Background of the Organization	67
	Standards for Endorsing Candidates	72
	The Board and Administration	76
	Some Selective Activities of the CLR	80
	Leadership, Ideals, and Pragmatic Political Concerns	85
	The Peace Movement and Other Issues	89
	Tom Bradley's Campaign for Mayor of Los Angeles, 1969	92
	Additional Work in the Minority Communities	95
	Resignation from CLR	97
	Community Organization and Human Values	100
V	INTO THE THIRD DECADE: VIEWER SPONSORED TELEVISION FOUNDATION	104
	The Failure of a Successful Project	105
	APPENDIX - Table of Contents	109
	INDEX	160





Errata in Manuscript of ELEANOR WAGNER

1. iv Introduction by Ruth Abraham  
(5th paragraph)  
"PS 80" is correct number of school.  
(I note that the original error was  
made by Ms Abraham. EW)
  
2. p. 68 (5th paragraph)  
In my original manuscript (that is, the  
Xerox copy sent me after the interview),  
on page 93 I made two inserts in the first  
paragraph which read as follows (I will par-  
enthesize the inserts):  
"At any rate, I guess it was Irwin  
(and Paul Albert) (who was a mature man,  
in his 40's, who returned to UCLA as an  
anthropology student) and Gifford  
Phillips."  
To further clarify, it was Paul Albert who  
was the anthropology student in his 40's,  
not Irwin Levin.
  
3. p. 110  
The title lists the background of CLR.  
It should substitute the initials CLC.  
(California Legislative Conference is  
the organization referred to.)



Please insert in the Eleanor Wagner oral history memoir.



## PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas unit of the project, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawski, and Walton Bean have served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, and Malca Chall.

20 May 1977  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California at Berkeley

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office



## CALIFORNIA WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- March Fong Eu, *High Achieving Nonconformist in Local and State Government*. 1977
- Jean Wood Fuller, *Organizing Women: Careers in Volunteer Politics and Government Administration*. 1977
- Elizabeth R. Gatov, *Grassroots Party Organizer to United States Treasurer*. 1977
- Bernice Hubbard May, *A Native Daughter's Leadership in Public Affairs*. 1976
- Hulda Hoover McLean, *A Conservative Crusader for Good Government*. 1977
- Julia Porter, *Dedicated Democrat and City Planner*. 1977
- Vera Schultz, *Marin County Perspective on Ideals and Realities in State and Local Government*. 1977
- Clara Shirpser, *One Women's Role in Democratic Party Politics*. 1975
- Elizabeth Snyder, *California's First Woman State Party Chairman*. 1977
- Eleanor Wagner, *Independent Political Coalitions: Electoral, Legislative, and Community*. 1977
- Carolyn Wolfe, *Educating for Citizenship: A Career in Community Affairs and the Democratic Party, 1906-1976*. 1977

## Interviews in Process

Frances Albrier	La Rue McCormick
Marjorie Benedict	Emily Pike
Odessa Cox	Wanda Sankary
Pauline Davis	Hope Mendoza Schecter
Ann Eliaser	Carmen Warschaw
Kimiko Fujii	Carol Arth Waters
Elinor R. Heller	Rosalind Wyman
Patricia R. Hitt	Mildred Younger
Lucile Hosmer	

June 1977



Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit

## Interviews in Process

Helen Gahagan Douglas

Arthur Goldschmidt

Juanita Barbee

Elizabeth Goldschmidt

Rachel Bell

Leo Goodman

Fay Bennett

Charles Hogan

Evelyn Chavoor

Mary Keyserling

Alis De Sola

Judge Byron Lindsley

Tilford Dudley

Helen Lustig

Walter Gahagan

Philip Noel-Baker

Frank Rogers





## INTRODUCTION by Ruth Abraham

Every once in a great while, one has the unique experience of working with a person whose understanding of and dedication to the important issues of the day mesh with one's own. Such a person is my friend, Eleanor Wagner.

I first met Elly years ago when we were members of the California Democratic Council (CDC). As part of the liberal caucus within CDC, we were not always successful in our missions, but we certainly were effectively articulate. We supported resolutions which condemned the proliferation of nuclear weapons; we opposed efforts to table discussion on the Cuban crisis; we supported efforts of minority groups to be represented at the CDC Conventions through our participation in credential committee bouts which sometimes lasted into the wee hours of the morning. When Elly spoke to any of the above, she would make her points in her deliberate and reasoned way.

Elly played an important organizing role in the election of Sy Casady to the CDC presidency. Crisis time in CDC came about when Casady asked for a vote of confidence from the organization as a result of his position in opposition to the policies of the Johnson administration and the then Governor of California, Pat Brown on the Vietnam war. Casady walked out when he was repudiated by a handful of votes.

However, long before the Casady debacle, Californians for Liberal Representation was formed. Elly's role in that organization was key and critical. As administrative secretary, she ran the operation. She wrote the letters...she compiled the reports...she hassled with the printers...she followed up lagging board members with constant reminders of their tasks and responsibilities. It was Elly's diligent attention to detail and follow-up that gave CLR the credibility it enjoyed. I especially remember her fantastic organizing job on a CLR function when Senator Wayne Morse received our Estes Kefauver Memorial Award. The Ambassador Hotel was packed to the rafters. I don't believe that anyone had seen or heard a political presentation of that calibre in many a year. She organized similar functions for William Shirer, Senator Frank Church, Congressman Ron Dellums, Mayor Tom Bradley and, of course, the original large meeting for Senator Kefauver.

CLR, because of its independence, and because of its support of the important issue of representation (especially in the Chicano community), supported Alex Garcia for a seat in the California legislature over and above



other candidates who were eminently more qualified...but Elly, with her determination and concern for disenfranchised communities, pushed for endorsement of Garcia. It was accomplished but was bitterly opposed by some members of our own CLR Board.

At the same time, the Elections & Reapportionment Committee of the State Legislature (chaired by the then Assemblyman Henry Waxman) presented a plan which totally disregarded the need for representation from the Mexican-American community. Elly, along with some of the leadership of CLR, led the fight against that plan. The court, recognizing the glaring deficiencies, came up with its own plan which provided opportunities for the Chicano community to elect representatives of their own.

As a consequence of Elly's insistence on representation, CLR played a very important political role in the eventual election of Congressman Ed Roybal, L.A. Board of Education President, Dr. Julian Nava, and more recently, Mayor Tom Bradley. Elly's expertise in marshalling the opinion makers of the liberal community along with her know-how of who and how to tap for monetary support was invaluable.

Recently, Elly was involved with the most provocative project ever. The launching, programming and funding of a "people's TV station"...KVST-TV, Channel 68, a viewer-sponsored station. Elly, Leslie Parrish, myself and others lobby'd the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors for grants of \$100,000 to support the station. I won't go into the politics of why KVST is not operable at this writing. I am certain that Elly has covered the proceedings in the following oral history. Suffice it to say that the experience was traumatic and bitter for me (a newly elected member to the Board of Directors shortly before it folded)...so it must have been one-hundred fold more tragic for her.

From a purely political friendship, Elly and I have grown as family. Perhaps that stems from our roots--way back in the Bronx, New York, when Elly and I attended the same elementary school, PS 50 and the same high school, Evander Childs (Woodlawn Annex)...even though neither of us knew that the other existed at that time! But, while I was able to carry on the liberal-left traditions of my family, Elly's family had an apolitical background with moderate to conservative opinions. I admire her all the more because it was her independent thinking which brought her to her sensitive and clear minded approach to the political issues of the day.

For the past fifteen years, I have been organizing local community chapters for the ACLU of Southern California. I am also deeply involved in legislative action on a National, State and Local County and City basis. It has been particularly satisfying to me to be able to confer with Elly about strategy,



community action and all the other areas of activity about which she is so knowledgeable. I could go on and on recounting Elly's effectiveness...but I would rather you got most of that information from the ensuing interview.

I am honored to have been asked to write this introduction about someone who has played such a fulfilling role in my life.

Ruth Abraham  
Chapter Director  
ACLU of Southern California

2 February 1977  
Los Angeles, California



## THE TRUE FACTS ABOUT ELLY WAGNER by Arthur Carstens

Most great liberal ideas die in living rooms where they are conceived. Progressive movements so often are drowned in cocktail glasses.

This was true in many communities such as Beverly Hills-San Fernando Valley-Westwood when I arrived in 1948. As I began attending meetings I heard the name Elly Wagner. I was puzzled. Her name did not appear on any roster of officials of social organizations but her name kept popping up in all sorts of places.

Finally I learned about Elly. She is the person who puts ideas on wheels and projects them out of a living room. If parts are missing she goes out and finds the parts that are needed to turn a sound idea into something that works. She is unobtrusive. She never serves as chairwoman but she is there when the help is needed to supply the axle grease or muscle or vitamin pills or the cogwheels--whatever is needed to transform a good idea into a working program. Elly is a pragmatist when it comes to means but don't expect her to bend when it comes to ends.

A bit of history may help. In the late forties and early fifties Beverly Hills and the wealthy western suburbs were represented by a red baiting, bigoted used auto salesman. McCarthyism was dawning, Hollywood was cringing. Chicanos and blacks were unrepresented at local, state and national levels.

In Los Angeles there was a need to become more aware of the needs and feelings of ghettoized communities located in south and southeast Los Angeles. Who were the actual and the potential leaders? How could the resources of the more affluent communities be mobilized to support the aspirations of the members of these depressed and unrepresented communities? And for the community at large--how could a good idea be transformed into an effective program?

Elly was one of a core of community movers who conceived of CLR, the Californians for Liberal Representation. CLR drew its membership from all parts of the city and mobilized them to help whatever community needed help to develop its own leadership and to define its own interests. And CLR engaged in a search for a good idea wherever it could be found.





One of my important memories of life in Los Angeles focuses on the day that Martin Luther King was murdered. I was driving on the Hollywood Freeway and going to a CLR meeting at Elly's house. Suddenly the announcement came over the radio that King had been killed. When I arrived at Elly's house she sat preparing notes for the meeting. As I entered the room she looked up and asked, "Art have you heard the news"? I said, "Yes." "I hope you agree, Art, that tears and the wringing of hands won't help. Martin Luther King may be dead but sure as hell his ideas are as alive as ever. Let's get to work and help these move forward."

That's Elly in case you don't know her.

Arthur Carstens

Administrator of Labor Programs  
and Extension Specialist,  
Institute of Industrial Relations,  
University of California at  
Los Angeles,  
retired

23 February 1977  
3092 Sloat Road  
Pebble Beach, California



## INTRODUCTION by Samuel Kalish

Elly Wagner has played an active part in the progressive movement as long as I've known her. And the key word is "active." My contact with her began on the Board of Directors of Californians for Liberal Representation (CLR), of which she was Administrative Secretary. Meetings of the Board were long and loud, usually ending in decisions of what to do next. Most small committees to carry out such decisions included Elly. And what was the CLR? A small group, at first, of chiefly white, middle class, anti-war advocates, determined to do something to change policy towards Vietnam. Our initial effort in 1962 helped the election of Edward Roybal and George Brown, Jr. to Congress. CLR raised funds, volunteered the expertise of Elly and colleagues in preparing election material and other office and organizational know-how. With representatives of the ACLU and SANE on the Board, CLR played an important role in the election of these two anti-war Congressmen in 1962.

The year 1962 is only two years after Rosa Parks electrified the Southern blacks to active resistance by refusing to go sit in the back of the bus. Their slow progress, under the most violent opposition, stirred the Watts community here in Los Angeles a few years later. The Los Angeles Central Labor Council, the UAW, and the UCLA Industrial Relations Department organized the Watts Labor Action Committee a few months before Watts exploded. CLR decided to join the blacks' efforts to elect qualified black candidates to remedy their miseries. We had some important black community leaders on the Board and coopted other blacks, labor leaders, and UCLA Industrial Relations leaders onto the Board as our activities grew. Elly's workload increased; her day's work lengthened, as did that of other members.

As the Mexican barrios began to follow the footsteps of the blacks, they too were offered help by CLR. A series of meetings were held with black and brown members of the CLR Board to encourage other blacks and browns intent upon organizing their respective communities. The lessons we had learned in election techniques were shared with the developing community groups. CLR coopted leaders of these community organizations to its Board of Directors. The election to the Los Angeles Board of Education by the Reverend James E. Jones, a black, and Dr. Julian Nava, a Mexican-American, excited the attention of other incipient communities. CLR began to be recognized as a catalyst in this broad people's movement for a better California.



Elly Wagner is generally considered an activist. I prefer the term pragmatist. The left of center is composed of theorists and activists. A pragmatist is one who can mix with both groups and who forms the cement that binds them together. She can pick a workable theory from impossible ones, and has excellent training and know-how for its implementation. However, she is human; she lacks the energy to work 18 hours a day in the battle; she tried, and learned her lesson.

CLR's claim to fame was crowned by the election of Tom Bradley as Mayor of Los Angeles. We were fortunate to be the catalyst in the development of minority communities organizing themselves for political action to end discrimination when the time was ripe for it. CLR was in the forefront of the first Bradley campaign for Mayor in 1969 which, although, narrowly unsuccessful, paved the way for community-wide acceptance of a black mayor in 1973.

And we were also fortunate in having the devoted volunteer services of our Administrative Secretary. She and her colleagues introduced office technology into the electoral process. She may belittle this know-how's impact. It is my opinion that there are too many philosophers, incidentally, with conflicting views that lead to fragmentation in the left of center, and too few pragmatists. Let's have more Elly Wagners.

Let me close with some personal remarks to dispel any picture of Elly Wagner as a political instrument. She is a warmhearted individual, a successful wife and mother, and a good friend. And let me close with the prediction that Elly's career in the political arena is far from over. She is preparing herself for another quarter century of meaningful participation.

16 February 1977  
327 North Lucerne  
Los Angeles, California

Samuel Kalish  
Deputy Labor  
Commissioner, retired;  
author of works on  
labor laws



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Eleanor Wagner was selected for the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project as an example of a political activist and leader loosely connected with the mainstream of establishment politics--generally left of center.

When I contacted her I knew only that she had been someone of prime importance to the California Legislative Conference and Californians for Liberal Representation, two organizations about which I knew little. Research in the library of the Institute for Governmental Studies in Berkeley provided some help in the form of several publications of the Legislative Conference, which did, at least indicate the impressive scope of the work of that organization.

Having forewarned Elly, as she asked to be called, that I would need to depend on her for virtually all information about her activities as well as these organizations, we agreed to work together on May 3, 1976 when I would be in the Los Angeles area. Following her clear directions, I found my way to the Wagner's home high in the hills overlooking the Silver Lake reservoir nearly an hour before I was expected. Although somewhat embarrassed to be unprepared for my arrival, Elly, at my suggestion continued with her own chores and left me alone to eat my bag lunch at the kitchen table, relaxing, and looking out onto the reservoir and the hills beyond.

From one o'clock until ten p.m., except for a pleasant dinner interval with Elly and her husband Murry, we recorded Elly's background in politics. She, by her own admission being a person who pays meticulous attention to details, had already pulled out of her files the many memoranda, letters, flyers, and other papers relevant to her career in politics. Although she hadn't seen some of them in a couple of decades, she still remembered keenly the people, the issues, the campaigns, the toil, and the excitement of coordinating the many-faceted efforts of the political coalitions with which she had been associated.

We completed five hours of conversation on tape, using the papers as the focal point of the interview. Samples of these papers have been set into the appendix of this volume in order to supplement the memoir and to fill in details which the pressure of time necessitated omitting from our discussion.

When the edited transcript was returned to Elly on November 2, 1976, she was, understandably, upset. It certainly did not come close to her standards of perfection. She had not spoken in perfectly grammatical sentences;





many important parts of her story had not been covered and I had asked her to add them in writing. Reviewing looked to her like an insurmountable task. But, being Elly, she cleared the way, eventually grappled with it, thoughtfully added the additional information, gave the memoir a final polish, and returned it on March 14, 1977.

In January, Elly and I met backstage on the Berkeley campus when her husband, who was acting in the role of the chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, came with the Los Angeles-based cast in the play "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been. . .?" Briefly we discussed some questions on editing. Then we met again in May, 1977 in Los Angeles, once again in Elly's upstairs office-sitting room, taking a couple of hours to work out some final details for the appendix. Finished, we visited over lunch, feeling assured that the manuscript would now offer an understanding view of Elly as well as the organizations in which she had labored for so many years.

The Wagners will soon be moving from their large, comfortably furnished home to a smaller one in another section of Los Angeles. There, with their books, magazines, and journals, and their collection of fine prints and paintings, they will begin a new stage in their lives. As one can discern from the memoir and from the several introductions written by friends and colleagues of many years, this next phase will be devoted as always to family, friends, and those issues which Elly deems crucial to man's fate in this last quarter of the twentieth century.

Because so little is known about the California Legislative Conference, the Californians for Liberal Representation, and the Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation, Elly agreed to deposit her collection of papers in the Department of Special Collections on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles, where, along with her oral history, it will become a part of that library's growing holdings on southern California regional history. The library of the Institute of Governmental Studies on the Berkeley campus made copies of the papers which I had brought back with me temporarily to help with the editing, and these copies will also be available for research. The appendix of this oral history, therefore, while it provides a good overview of the work and issues of these independent coalitions can only whet the reader's appetite for what can be found in both the complete and the nearly-complete collections at Los Angeles and Berkeley.

Malca Chall  
Interviewer-Editor

13 June 1977  
Berkeley, California



## BRIEF BIOGRAPHY -- Eleanor Wagner

- 1917            Born in Bronx, New York
- 1932            Moved to Los Angeles
- 1936-1942      Worked in film studios and little theatre first as dancer,  
and later as secretary
- 1942-1946      Neighborhood political action
- 1946            Secretary, Ellis Patterson write-in campaign
- 1947-1956      Executive Secretary, California Legislative Conference
- 1955-1962      Bellvue Democratic Club; Dyna Construction Company, Inc.
- 1962-1972      Administrative Secretary, Californians for Liberal  
Representation
- 1972-1976      Board member, Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation;  
Coordinator for Government Grants



I FAMILY BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, AND EARLY CAREERS IN  
WORK AND POLITICS

[Date of Interview: 3 May 1976]

[Begin tape 1, side A]

The Family

Chall: Always I like to know first your bith date, place of birth, and your background.

Wagner: I was born in the Bronx, New York City, on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1917. I have two older brothers, one of whom is dead. My name was Eleanor Klein. [Spells it] My parents came from Hungary.

Chall: When?

Wagner: My dad came here when he was a little boy. Probably in 1886 or 1887. My mother as a young teenager in 1900. My dad was a musician. He played the Hungarian cymbalom, which is a native instrument of Hungary--very beautiful. He was a natural musician, and had perfect pitch. He played with older musicians when he was a child. He played in the St. Louis World's Fair and other places. He traveled quite a bit with Paul Whiteman. He was the virtuoso. He became--well, I'm getting ahead of myself.

My mother was a complete housewife.

Chall: What was her name?

Wagner: Rose. My father's name was Julius.

Chall: His name was Julius Klein. And your mother's name was Rose--what?



Wagner: Rosenberg Klein.

Chall: Rose Rosenberg Klein?

Wagner: That's right. Our household was not intellectual. Can I ask you a question? I don't know how much you want of this kind of thing.

Chall: I do [want it].

Wagner: Oh, you do. It was not intellectual. It was indeed pretty temperamental. My father was the typical Hungarian temperamental musician. He drank quite a lot. Very warm and very loving, in some respects. I always said that he loved children, flowers and animals, and had a great contempt for adults, unless they had made it! [Laughs] He at times even could be considered an anti-Semitic Jew.

He was rather like a peacock, had to rule the roost, and really was a dominating character in our household. He totally subjugated my mother. I think her only security was in dressing nicely and looking well, and in taking care of her children. She was a very fine Hungarian cook. She had no outside interests.

My older brother--

Chall: What was his name?

Wagner: Harold was a very sensitive young man, a violinist. That wasn't quite good enough for Dad. He wanted him to make it professionally, and insisted that he go to college. He went to pre-dental school. He was not at all equipped emotionally, anyway, and he flunked out. He sort of went inside after that. He was just not very communicative, and he wasn't very happy with himself. He was nine years older than I, and I never really knew him as a brother, except the usual play at home, but not much.

My other brother, Seymour, was four years older than I, and a premature baby who cried a lot. He had temper tantrums. He was always yelling at the family. Dinner time was the favorite time. I just didn't have a very warm, rich background. There was nobody I could ever go to.

Chall: Was your mother a warm person when she was young?

Wagner: I'm sure she was, because I saw glimpses, but she was so beleaguered and unhappy. I was really her mother. She would come to me for advice and for sustenance, and for warmth. As in Jewish families,





Wagner: she called me "mammeleh." My opinions and my advice--my strength, I suppose--guided her. I was my father's pride and joy. We moved to Atlantic City when I was two years old.

Chall: You moved to Atlantic City?

Wagner: Yes. My dad had an orchestra at the Traymore Hotel. As I say, he was a natural musician. He had perfect pitch. He would take the musicians down to the beach, and bet on the key of the waves, and run back to the hotel to prove it, the key on the piano.

Chall: [Laughter] Really?

Wagner: Yes. He was extraordinary. My son has that kind of an ear.

Chall: Did all of this come from playing only the cymbalom? All he ever played in an orchestra was the cymbalom?

Wagner: Yes, the cymbalom, in Hungarian orchestras. In Atlantic City--this was a dance band. With Paul Whiteman, he was a solo guest artist. He didn't usually play with the orchestra. At times, of course, he joined the orchestra in concert to play the "Hungarian Rhapsody." It's an interesting instrument. It sounds like a combination of a harp and a piano. It's played with two mallets. The sounds are very rich.

Chall: How long did you stay in Atlantic City?

Wagner: We stayed in Atlantic City from the time I was two until I was eight. Six years.

Chall: And he had his own orchestra there?

Wagner: Yes. Then Paul Whiteman spotted him and engaged him. They traveled--that was at the height of the Whiteman era. So we moved back to New York, while he was on the road.

Chall: Were you back in the Bronx?

Wagner: In the Bronx. We moved uptown somewhat further, around the university--NYU [New York University]--up north. [Laughs] I guess it's about 180th and Burnside Avenue. I started school in Atlantic City, and then I went to grammar school in the Bronx, and had very few warm memories of my childhood. A lot of anger in the family, and loneliness on my part. I had a couple of friends, and I didn't have too much communication with my brothers.



Chall: Were they still at home? Your older brother who was nine years older--at what time did he leave the house?

Wagner: [Laughs] Much, much later. Seymour came to California first. As they say, "the child shall lead them." Dad being kind of adventurous... It was just about the time of the Depression--a little bit later than that, by about a year. I guess it was '30 or '31 that we came to California. We stayed here for six months and went back to New York. We came back again to stay in '32, I think, in Los Angeles. I went to Hollywood High School.

Chall: I may have slipped up on what Seymour did.

Wagner: Well, he was always interested in communications. When he was in the Navy, he was in the Naval Air Force, and he learned radio operatorship, [laughs] and was a naval radio operator.

Chall: In what years was that?

Wagner: Well, it was '42, '43, '44.

Chall: But he came out before then?

Wagner: Oh, yes. He was a teenager. He became an extra, as a matter of fact, when he came out here.

Chall: He just came out?

#### Professional Dancer in Hollywood: The Dancers' Federation

Wagner: Yes. He hitchhiked out with a cousin. I started to say that after we moved to Atlantic City I took my first dancing class. I was five years old. I belonged to the Dawson Dancing Dolls. [Spells it] My dad, from that time on, wanted me to become a professional. Actually, an actress, although he had ambivalence. Actresses were "blankety-blanks." But he thought I was, you know, very pretty and talented.

And I was, I was. I didn't recognize it then, but I've seen some pictures, and I was pretty. [Laughs nostalgically] So I was a dancer from the time I was a little girl in Atlantic City. I danced in several auditoriums, and won a gold medal. My mother says I got the gold medal for dancing, but I really got it because we sold the most tickets. But she wouldn't say that! [Laughs] Truly!



Chall: Ballet, tap, what kind?

Wagner: Oh, ballet, acrobatic, tap, interpretive. As a matter of fact, at one point in my life here, I was a dancer in the studios, which I loathed. Father insisted that I try it. It was an ugly experience, because you went for audition after audition. It was whom you knew, and whom you knew very well, and whom you knew intimately--it just wasn't my cup of tea.

Chall: Did you explain that to your father?

Wagner: Ummm, sort of, yes. He had blind spots and deaf ears at some points-- "Oh, you can take care of yourself."

Chall: He wanted his family's name in lights, one way or another?

Wagner: Yes, that's right. It was very, very important to him. The catalyst for my quitting dancing that I remember--I was at a football game at USC (I remember it was USC and Oregon State) with a gentleman, a lawyer. They never announce over the loudspeaker for an individual unless it's a matter of life or death. They said, "Would Eleanor Klein please call her home--urgent!"

Well, I just didn't know which member of the family it was. There was no question. I climbed up the steps--dozens of them it seemed-- and the phone was busy, and I was getting more and more apprehensive. I got to the phone, and it was Dad. He said, "There's a call from Paramount for an audition on Monday." I got hysterical. He said, [mimicking] "Well, you would have gotten mad if I did call or I didn't call." And, of course, on Monday--P.S.--I didn't get the job, so I quit.

At that point, I went to RKO, where a friend of mine worked, and asked if she could get me a job in the secretarial department.

Chall: How old were you then?

Wagner: I was--let's see--that was in 1939 so I was about twenty-two. But you should know before then--I'm trying to trace my interest in politics--when I was a dancer, that was actually '36, when I was nineteen.

Chall: When you went to work for RKO?

Wagner: No, not as a secretary. I was a dancer before then.



Chall: You had actually been a dancer before then? It wasn't just a question of trying?

Wagner: Oh, no.

Chall: You were a dancer?

Wagner: Oh, I was in several films. You'd have to look hard to find me, [laughs] but I was there.

Chall: So you were a professional?

Wagner: Oh, yes. I had had an unfortunate personal relationship, and it turned out badly, and so my father said, "Now you're going to do what I want you to do. You'll become a dancer. I'll introduce you to these people in the studios," and that's how I became a dancer.

Chall: So you became a dancer in the studios?

Wagner: That's how I became a professional. This was in, I would say, about '36 to '37. Yes, it was in '37. It was very hard to get jobs. There was an organization that was formed that was called the Dancers' Federation. They were mostly ballet dancers. They were both studio and non-studio ballet dancers. As I say, it was very hard to get jobs. It was so bad--there was no union, of course. At the Hollywood Bowl, the girls would dance (I say "girls" because most of them were very young, although there were women, too), they would be invited to dance at the Hollywood Bowl for nothing. There was quite a bit of prestige attached to performing at the Bowl.

Mrs. Leland Atherton Irish was a philanthropist in those days. She would present the dancers with bouquets of flowers, and some of us felt that wow, we had made it. So, many dancers, under the leadership of some left-of-center to left-wing radical women, organized this Dancers' Federation. They were able to--I tell you, I was very naive--make certain demands so that there was at least a minimum wage established at the Hollywood Bowl. I'm not so sure what they did about the studios in those days.

To me, it was very exciting. You met together with very alive people, and they met in very poor places. We never were affluent, but my father being a specialist, so to speak, in the music business always made a decent living for his family--the only one in his family that did make a living. [Laughs] He came from a very poor family. We always had a nice house.





Wagner: The dancers would meet in garages and little one-room places. It was very romantic to me. I really was quite a sentimental kid, coming from a very mooshy family! [Laughs] Even though they'd fight, there were lots of soft spots in the Kleins. I can't say it was the class struggle and the economic deprivation or any of those values that attracted me to the plight of the dancers. It was just sheer fantasy. These poor kids were really struggling, but to me it was just fun.

There was another serious part. I can't say "emphathize," because that would not be correct, but I know that there were stirrings of compassion. I've always been very sensitive to injustice, whether it was a dog, or a friend, or myself being unjustly punished, or whatever.

I felt very comfortable, contrasted to most of my life when I have not felt comfortable. In that milieu, I felt comfortable. I felt it was right. But it was a feeling. It wasn't too much thinking at the time.

I remember one meeting, there was such excitement because they said that a new organization had been formed that was really going to revolutionize the trade union movement. It was called the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Yes, that was in 1937, because I remember I was exactly twenty.

I remember talking about this Congress of Industrial Organizations. I didn't even know what Congress meant! [Laughs] But that was kind of exciting. Also at that time, again, I was approached by some of the dancers to come to a meeting of the Motion Picture Democratic Committee. We were going to work--or they were going to work, and I was going to be helpful--to support a candidate of the Democratic party named Culbert Olson.

That was just before my first voting eligibility age. It was on Sunset Boulevard. There was this big old house, and Melvyn Douglas was chairman, and a lot of names I'd heard about. Many writers, as a matter of fact, and some directors. Oh, names like--let's see--there was a choreographer named Danny Dare, a writer named Henry Meyers; a writer, Edward Eliscu, and a writer named True Boardman. Then some of the wives of writers, actors, and actresses. That was really glamour!

After high school, I did go to business college and learned many skills. I became a legal secretary. That's before the dancing thing. Out of high school, I went to Sawyer's Business College. I learned



Wagner: shorthand and typing and legal stenography. I went to some employment agency, and I got a job part-time for five dollars a week. I thought, "That's terrible. I should pay them, because I have no experience!"

Chall: Could I just ask, before we get too far ahead--the plan was that you were to become a professional dancer? It was your father's plan?

Wagner: Well, he wanted me to become an actress. I did little theater also.

Chall: So you went to business college just so you could make some kind of a living in-between? Was there a plan that you would be a struggling actress, making a living on the side?

Wagner: No, that came afterwards, you see--my dad's influence. When I was in high school, we hadn't talked about very much of anything. I wanted to go to college. I was interested in law. Dear old Dad said [mimics scornfully], "Oh, girls don't become lawyers or professionals." We didn't talk about my career at the time. Throughout my life, he had said, "You should be an actress--at the very least, a dancer."

I did little theater. He introduced me to a couple of people, James Timony, who was Mae West's business manager, and one of her many lovers, as I understand. [Spells name] And so I joined the New Hampshire Little Theater that he owned. [Laughs] It was on New Hampshire Avenue. That was a fiasco that I'd rather not go into.

Chall: You just weren't meant to be an actress?

Wagner: Oh, I really enjoyed acting. I am a good actress, and I did some very good parts. As a matter of fact, when I worked at RKO--as a secretary, not as a dancer--I was in the RKO Little Theater, and did some very good work. I really loved it. But I wasn't willing to struggle with it. I was very confused about everything, about everything!

Chall: This was no great passion of yours, to become an actress?

Wagner: No. I enjoyed it when I was doing it. I loved the rehearsals. I liked the camaraderie. But I really had no security, no confidence at all. I guess that was really the key, you know--"Boy, I'm going to make it, I'm great!" I liked it, but I didn't feel I was good enough, I think.

I had some very interesting experiences in little theater. I enjoyed it. I keep going back and forth, and I don't know where we are right now! [Laughs]



Chall: That's all right. Let's see. We were with the Motion Picture... I guess this probably leads into what you were able to do for the Motion Picture Democratic Committee for Culbert Olson.

Wagner: Right. That was at that time. I did typing and whatnot. It was very, very glamorous. We would have meetings at Melvyn Douglas' home, and that was just beautiful. Helen Gahagan had just had a little baby, and she was lovely.

Chall: You must have been one of the youngest people on that committee.

Wagner: Yes, I was. I remember we had a parade down Hollywood Boulevard, and we had to carry a huge American flag. Each one of us carried a corner. They made me a little red and white gingham dress, and I dragged my girlfriend from school in a blue and white gingham dress. People would throw money, so that's how we raised money for part of the campaign! [Laughter]

Chall: That's a primitive method!

Wagner: Well, that's part of it. It was a peoples' campaign, you see. [Laughs] I don't know at what point the Hollywood Theater Alliance was organized, an effort to bring culture to the Hollywood community, culture meaning theater, and musicales and lectures, and that sort of thing. I was the secretary of the women's committee--my lot in life. [Laughs] I knew shorthand!

Let's see--this was about the time that the Motion Picture--well, I guess the Hollywood Theater Alliance came out of the Motion Picture Democratic Committee. The Hollywood Theater Alliance put on a musical called "Meet the People." It became so successful--many stars came out of that--that the people who wrote it, and who had this great ideal concept of bringing culture to Hollywood, were grabbed up by New York and the movies, and that was the end of the culture! [Laughs]

Then, as I say, I was in the dancing end of the industry. I enjoyed the Dancers' Federation, but they went the way of many such ad hoc groups. I think they had the mission for the Hollywood Bowl, and once they had accomplished something there, that was the end of it. Then I had that very bad experience at the Coliseum, and the awful audition--

Chall: The Coliseum?

Wagner: That's where I was, at the football game.

Chall: [Laughs] Oh yes, so I see.



Secretarial Pool at RKO Studios: The Screen Office Employees Guild

Wagner: So I called my friend, and said, [laughs] I want to go back to my tried-and-true secretarial job, and she got me into RKO in the secretarial pool. A secretarial pool--I don't know if you know--is a place where you're available to be called out for assignments to writers, to the music department, to the trick effects department, to the producers, to the directors. Eventually, you're assigned to one person.

I really loved that. That was a community, at RKO. You had a family of not only secretaries, but people from other departments. I had some marvelous experiences there. At that time, there were a few people on the lot with whom I'd talked, and I'd said I'd been on the Motion Picture Democratic Committee. They talked about the fact that they were organizing a new union, the Screen Office Employees Guild.

There had not been a union for specific departments. Would I be interested? I said, "Oh, sure, I know all about that. I was with the Dancers' Federation." As a matter of fact, one woman introduced me to a newspaper known as P.M. I don't know if you know about that one. That was the first publication that I read, and that was interesting. So I joined the organizing committee of the S.O.E.G.

(I remember we put on a play. I was Miss Technicolor. I wore a green suit and a red turban.) We were chartered under the International Painters, Paperhangers and Decorators of America. This is interesting.

Chall: The AFL.

Wagner: Yes. The local unions were chartered under major other unions that had nothing to do with our skill, except that this was the Hollywood local. Herbert Sorrell was the business agent, I think. He was the top dog of the Painters and Paperhangers. I learned something about negotiating. I wasn't one of the officials, by any means, but it was interesting sitting in on the organizing.

Chall: You were doing it because it was interesting, and a sort of good emotional experience, or were you intellectually committed by this time to organizing employees? I'm just comparing it with how you felt about the Dancers' Federation.





Wagner: That's a good question. My interest was economic at this point. At that time, we were getting twenty dollars a week, and if you were really good, you were getting twenty-five dollars a week. If you were a top producer's secretary, you got forty dollars a week.

[End side A, tape 1]

[Begin tape 1, side B]

Chall: I want to get some kind of date on the Screen Office Employees Guild. Was that about 1940, or are we past that?

Wagner: No, we are still in '39.

Chall: Good. I just wanted to keep all these dates right.

Wagner: I know exactly where I stopped. I was saying that my work was very exacting. I worked very hard, particularly with writers. I have also had a flair for writing, and my advice was sought. I was helpful. The writers many times would try thoughts out on their secretaries, so I was kind of--I wouldn't say sought after, but I did well, and they enjoyed my work.

I felt it was unfair--that disparity--because I knew some of the producers' secretaries just read books and made appointments and talked on the phone. I worked really hard. So it was economic with me. It was very definitely thinking rather than feeling at that point. The play was fun, but other than that, it was economic.

We did win the bargaining, and immediately salaries went up to a minimum of forty dollars. Quite a jump.

Chall: What did you do with this group to win your point? Did you threaten to withdraw your services?

Wagner: I don't recall. I was not in the leadership. I was not, and I know there were many meetings with management, and even some of the old-timers, producers' secretaries who were with us, made their points. I think they knew it was coming. As I recall, there was no strike or anything like that. It was really an evolution. I'm sure there's much more that somebody [else] could tell you. There were some men involved. It's not important, but I remember who they are.

Chall: Who were they?



Wagner: Bernard Lusher, and Glen Pratt.

Chall: These men were some of the leaders?

Wagner: Yes. Bernard Lusher, I think, was a business agent, and Glen Pratt was president, I think. Also male, all male! [Laughs]

Chall: It wasn't anything that you thought about at that time?

Wagner: Male or female?

Chall: Yes.

Wagner: Not I. I was very glad to let somebody else do it at that time.

#### Additional Family Background

Chall: Can I ask you now about your father? When you gave up dancing and went back into the secretarial pool, did that bring about any kind of a break between you two?

Wagner: No. I created such a fuss. I was so furious at his calling me, and the frustration. He was not that strong a man. He would bully, unless he were bullied back. The problem was, very seldom did we bully back! Seymour did, and they would just yell, and that would be the end of it. He really wasn't that strong. I was a coward. [Laughs]

Chall: What was he doing in Los Angeles at that time? Was he still working?

Wagner: Oh, yes. When we came out here, he worked--I don't remember how he got this, but anyway--he worked at Agua Caliente in the casino, again as an independent one-man entertainer. He did very well, because that was the heyday of the horse race crowd. The motion picture people came. Bing Crosby had his horses, and you know, he was very very successful.

They would throw gambling chips on his musical instrument--I'll show you a picture of it; it's downstairs. It's a wide table-like affair. Very beautiful. One of the instruments was mahogany--another was walnut. They would throw hundred-dollar chips. They would bet each other that Dad couldn't remember certain songs. He had a fantastic memory for songs, and that was it! Nothing else. So we were able to pay back loans we made to come out here.



Wagner: From there, he went to the Biltmore Hotel, and he worked in the cocktail lounge there, which at that point was very chichi. The same man who owned the Agua Caliente--a man named Baron Long--owned the Biltmore Hotel, a very famous name.

Chall: Baron Long?

Wagner: That's his name, not his title. [Laughs] Dad worked at the Biltmore for nine years. Then he went to Las Vegas. He worked usually in the cocktail lounge, and mostly on tips. He always had me write letters to various clubs and hotels for jobs. That was a big burden. I'd copy one letter, and I'd have to change it. It was always a burden. It was really a heavy burden. If he didn't get the job, I felt responsible.

His life was trying to get a job, trying to keep a job, trying to get a job, trying to keep a job. That was it. That was the extent of our discussions.

Chall: And trying to get a job and trying to keep a job had something to do with his personality or with the economic situation at the time?

Wagner: Well, clubs don't keep musicians indefinitely. They have a run. It's a four-week, or if you're really successful and bring in the business, you'll have it extended. So he would get a job in a hotel or a club, and he developed a mailing list. We would send out announcements to his followers that Julius Klein was going to be here or there. I'm very unhappy that I don't have an album or scrapbook to show you, but my brother and I are not very friendly, and he took the album when my Dad died.

Chall: Seymour?

Wagner: That's Seymour.

Chall: Is your older brother dead?

Wagner: Yes, he died very suddenly... But sometimes Dad couldn't deliver; sometimes he couldn't bring new customers to a place; not because of his personality because he had a great gift of gab. He'd say, "I'll double, triple your business. Just give me a chance." They would. Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't.

Many times, he worked mostly for tips, you know. In those days, it was \$100, \$150, \$200, \$250 a week--so, you know, he did well, relatively. I guess you would call us a low-middle class.



Chall: Where in Los Angeles were you living in those days?

Wagner: We always lived--well, not at the beginning, but we lived rather nicely. We lived west of Fairfax near Wilshire, in Crescent Heights, always around that area. Then near La Brea and Beverly, they bought a very nice home. They bought the house on Alta Vista Boulevard in 1939 for \$12,500, and we sold it for \$45,000 in 1966, when Dad died. It's probably double that now. I even had my own room, for the first time in my life. I used to sleep in the living room in something like a Morris chair. Do you know what a Morris chair is?

Chall: Yes.

Wagner: It looks like that. The back goes down and the front folds, and I finally had my own room!

...I'm not sure where we are now.

Chall: I just wanted to know about your father, and what he was doing in Los Angeles. I also would like to know if he came over--and your mother, too--with their own families. Did you have grandparents in this country, and cousins, on either side?

Wagner: My father had a very large family. Yes, he came with his father and mother from Hungary. I think in the family, at one point, there were six brothers and three sisters. My mother had no family here. She came over as an orphan with her three sisters--not all at the same time. She worked in an embroidery factory.

Chall: In the United States?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: In New York?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: And your father was an accomplished musician at the time he came over?

Wagner: Oh, no, he was two years old.

Chall: How did he happen to play that instrument?

Wagner: His father was a violinist, and he grew up with the gypsies. Dad did too. He spoke gypsy, although he was very fair-skinned. Most gypsies are very dark-skinned. I'm sure he lived a very frustrated





Wagner: life. He had a great joy of living, you know. He would bow--he was a short man--and he would bow in the European fashion, although he wasn't brought up in Europe. He traveled with Hungarian musicians. He had illusions of grandeur. He would talk about some of the people he entertained as "friends"--but they thought, I'm sure, he was really--not a beggar, but close to it!--wanting tips. "My dear friend, Ed Pauley," and all these people. He was really a fine entertainer, warm, funny, but it was a little different at home.

Chall: How much schooling had he had?

Wagner: He didn't finish grammar school.

Chall: Oh, he didn't.

Wagner: No, and neither did my mother. I don't even know what schooling she had.

Chall: What about the religion? Was there Judaism in your home as a religion, or not?

Wagner: Well, that's a good question. Many Hungarians are primarily nationalists, and my grandmother kept a Jewish house--separate dishes. She wore a sheitel, which is the covered wig. My father had an ambivalence to Judaism, and he would speak disparagingly at times of certain Jewish friends, but I had to stay home from school, because I was Jewish!

Chall: On holidays?

Wagner: On certain holidays.

Chall: What did this holiday mean?

Wagner: Just "Never mind! You're Jewish, you have to do it!" No teaching, no understanding. Consequently, I developed very few emotional ties to Judaism. My mother fasted. Dad didn't, but she didn't require that we did. So you ask a simple question; it's a complex answer.

Chall: And Passover?

Wagner: My aunt and uncle had a Seder. My mother had--let's see. There were four sisters and a brother in her family, and no parents when they came over here. A very undemonstrative and not-close family. My father's family was very close, except for my father. We lived in the



- Wagner: Bronx, and they lived down in Brooklyn. Once in awhile, we would drive our car down to Brooklyn, and everyone would hover around the area. I was made to feel very special. They put me in the middle of the floor to dance and sing.
- Chall: You were the coming star?
- Wagner: Yes, when I was a little girl. I would never do that to children, ever, because I always felt I was special and I didn't like it.
- Chall: So you didn't grow up with cousins much? They lived far away.
- Wagner: No. Well, I had two cousins on my mother's side. We lived in the same house as my mother's sister and her children, two boys whom I adore. But the sisters were not close. They didn't talk from time to time for years, but the kids did. [Laughs] Happy memories!
- Chall: I just wanted to fill all that in. Now we can move back into the organizing.
- Wagner: It's very clear in my mind the chronology, as I mentioned. I graduated from Hollywood High School in 1934. I went to Sawyer Business College, and I--let's see, that was in '35--worked for this lawyer for five dollars a week. Then I got another job, and I worked for five lawyers (after the five-dollar-a-week lawyer) for twenty-five dollars a week.
- Chall: In one firm?
- Wagner: No, it was in one suite. Those weren't too lucrative days, and among the five of them, they paid me twenty-five dollars a week. That is, they didn't pay me even that amount so I had to go to the Labor Commission to collect it.
- Chall: This was between '35 and--?
- Wagner: This was between '35 and '37, something like that. Then I had this traumatic relationship, and my Dad said, "Now you do what I want you to do," and so he introduced me to LeRoy Prinz of Paramount Studio, and Busby Berkeley of Warner Brothers--these were dance directors. I worked for Albertina Rasch at MGM. She was a ballet teacher and choreographer. She's very well-known. I don't remember who at RKO. Then I did that for about a year and a half, or so, and then went to work in early '39 for regular wages. In August of '40, I married Milton Raymond, my high school friend. I continued working at RKO. Came the war, and Milt opened a small defense plant with a friend, and started to make money.



## II SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT: THE FIRST DECADE, 1946-1956

Beginning Political Action

Wagner: In the neighborhood where I lived, near Beverly and Fairfax, I was a member of one of the first Jewish centers--Beverly-Fairfax Jewish Center. I was elected to the board of directors there--that was about '41 or '42.

Chall: While you were still working?

Wagner: No, I stopped working in '42. There were some people in the Beverly-Fairfax Jewish Community Center who told me about a new organization called the National Citizens' Political Action Committee--NCPAC-- which was the neighborhood counterpart of the CIO-PAC, Political Action Committee. Is any of this familiar to you? That was very interesting. They formed neighborhood groups.

I'm not clear what the interim years are, because I'm thinking of the OPA [Office of Price Administration] problem, when the OPA was in danger of being terminated. We had neighborhood strike actions, because we didn't want price control to be ended.

Chall: I think that was very near the end of the war.

Wagner: That's right. In the meantime, NCPAC...I don't recall some of the other things that we did, but they were all involved with war effort, with jobs, with discrimination. I remember that very well, because there was a big street-corner meeting at Gilmore Stadium, on Third and Fairfax. There was a truck, and I was distributing leaflets for NCPAC.

I remember Averill Berman, one of the speakers. I don't know if you've ever heard of his name. He was a brilliant political commentator on radio. It took a great deal of courage on his part to speak out on



Wagner: some highly controversial issues at that time and we appreciated his honesty. He was ousted from the air--probably through some right-wing pressures. Many of us were very irate. He had a great following. There was an Averill Berman Radio Defense Fund developed around the issue and a lot of activity.

In '45, I guess, was this OPA business. I remember we picketed the May Company, distributed leaflets, to protest the high prices.

Chall: What was your relation with the national political action--?

Wagner: NCPAC?

Chall: Yes. Were you a member or a leader on--?

Wagner: Well, as I recall, we had neighborhood groups. I was a delegate from my area. The CIO-PAC had called people together, groups together, and I remember going down there. The CIO was at 5851 Avalon Boulevard. Avalon and Slauson, at that time the CIO building. I met many of the union people there. I really felt very comfortable there. I liked where I was.

I didn't like where I was in my marriage, because my husband was making a lot of money, and didn't seem to care about the social problems which were developing. He was making quite a lot of money in his defense plant, although he was very poor when we first got married. We lived with my folks. That was okay; I was working, and it was all right. I was going on to this life in the political field, and Milt just didn't dig it. He was busy working. He was very much in love with me, but that was it, that was his life. I don't know. I never got close enough to really talk to him about what his turn-off was.

I remember--I guess it was the L.A. Times at the time. They still are non-union. I think I had started to read the People's World at that point, whether it was through the NCPAC or the CIO or some of the people in the neighborhood, I'm not sure. But I thought it was a very good paper. It had a different point of view than the others. Milt would read the Times and the sports section, and I would say, "How can you read that paper!?" It's a non-union paper, and discriminates!" and he'd say, "I like the sports!" Everything annoyed me, because he just wasn't moving. He was a lovely guy. I saw him several years ago, and we embraced; he's just a nice man. But he wasn't moving anyplace. He was just making money, and loved me, and liked me to get clothes, and I would just have none of it. I was very unhappy--very unhappy!--when I was at home. But I would just shine among my friends. [Sighs]





[The following material was added after editing]

Wagner: I think I should mention at this point some thoughts I had at that time, in connection with the war, with Milt's "making money" from the war, and with my continuing to work at the studio. I began to feel somewhat guilty and confused: Since we didn't need the money anymore--well, you see, at the beginning of our marriage we lived with my parents so Milt could invest any available moneys in the defense plant he bought. I continued to work at RKO and we lived on my meagre salary. We didn't need very much to live on because we had virtually no overhead to pay.

At any rate, I knew that some unmarried young women were anxious to work at the studio and really needed the job so I decided to quit and stay at home. I felt, as did most of my friends, that whatever we could do here at home to help the war effort should be done. You may remember, most people in the United States were behind World War II and there was a unity of purpose seldom felt before, or since for that matter.

While I was still working at RKO, I volunteered one or two nights a week at the Hollywood Canteen. That was a lot of fun, as well as helping to build morale among the soldiers, sailors and marines. We served food and beverages--non-alcoholic, that is--and we danced with the men to some of the largest and best-known bands in the country. There was also a live show each night with stars, singers, dancers, comedians, and other entertainers who contributed their talents. I believe Bette Davis was the president of the Canteen at that time.

Anyway, after I stopped working at RKO I heard that the Red Cross needed volunteers in the Publicity Department. I worked there practically full-time, as a volunteer of course, and our project at the time was to enlist women to sign up for classes in the volunteer Nurses Aide Corps. You may remember there was a critical shortage of nurses since many of them were sent overseas. The jobs assigned to Nurses Aides were "goodies" like the bed pan detail, bathing patients, taking their temp, pulse and respiration count, generally trying to make the patient comfortable and to save the energies of trained nurses for more critical needs.

The promotion on that campaign was so successful that I sold myself on signing up for the Nurses Aide classes. Parenthetically, I must admit my ambivalence at that time. You see, I've had a long history of fainting whenever I was exposed to pain, both my own and others' pain. I've had some very funny incidents in that regard through the years--not all funny, however. And so, clutching my fears, I signed up, learned a great deal, and had a few near-fainting experiences. Let's see, one was my having to observe the birth of a baby; another was



Wagner: having to stay with a post-op teenager who was still under anesthesia; another was at the children's ward in an orthopedic hospital, seeing the helplessness of paralytic and bone-diseased children. Traumatic!

At any rate, I worked as a Nurse's Aide in nine hospitals over a period of about two years or so. The assignment at the Birmingham General Army Hospital in the San Fernando Valley was particularly traumatic to me. The returning veterans were from the Pacific theatre and they were mostly in ghastly conditions: psychologically and physically. I rather think this particular experience solidified my anti-war feelings. These young men could never really go home again, in the same manner that they left home. War seemed not only senseless, but brutal! Except, of course, to those who profited by it.



Chall: After the war, then, were you divorced?

Wagner: We took a long trip. It was a marvelous, beautiful trip, but I was very unhappy. [Laughs] We came back, again to our neighborhood there. This was in 1946, and Ellis Patterson was a congressman. He had run for the U.S. Senate. The other Democrat was Will Rogers, Jr.\* Is this familiar to you? There was Helen Gahagan Douglas at that time, too.

Was it in '44 that they were all dumped? It was Patterson, Douglas, Jerry Voorhis of San Dimas, because of the Nixon smear.

Chall: Not Helen Gahagan Douglas.

Wagner: No, not she.

Chall: It was '46 when Voorhis was defeated.

#### Ellis Patterson Write-in Campaign, 1946

Wagner: Patterson was defeated with all these people. Some of my friends were his friends; a few of them are dead now. Victor Shapiro, who is my son's godfather. He was a very successful p.r. man. He used to be in the motion picture industry. He helped to make Mae West famous, and Rudolph Valentino, and several other people.

Well, Vic Shapiro was in the West Hollywood Democratic Club. So was George Cowell, who is dead, and Louis Waldeck, who is dead-- all three of them, as a matter of fact, were all good friends and friends of "Pat" as he was called. Louie, we called him. It was he who introduced me to the NCPAC through the Beverly-Fairfax Jewish Community Center. He was an independent radical.

Victor Shapiro had done so many of the beautiful brochures for left-wing causes and Democratic club causes. That was before CDC, of course. So they were friends of Ellis Patterson. They convinced him-- it didn't take much convincing--to run as a write-in candidate for Congress after he was defeated for the Senate. It was the old Sixteenth Congressional District. He ran against Donald Jackson, a Republican.

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\*Will Rogers, Jr. defeated Ellis Patterson in the 1946 primary for the U.S. Senate seat of William Knowland. Knowland was victorious in the general election.



Wagner: Vic--this is parenthetical--was a very good friend of Jimmy Roosevelt, too, and what was he at the time? I don't remember. So Louie and all these people--George Cowell--we held a meeting at I guess it was Lou's house, to determine the organization of the leadership of the write-in campaign. The campaign manager was a man called Kay Kelleher. He was a brilliant strategist, a left, independent guy.

He was on the Democratic County Central Committee, which stood for something in those days. They were responsible for precinct organization.

I was chosen as guess what!? secretary of the campaign! That was exciting. We had an office near Robertson and Melrose. I was still married in '46--married in name only, almost. I really learned. That was my first paid political job. Being the guilty person I was, I worked eighteen hours a day. [Laughs] We all did, but it was really a labor of love.

In a write-in campaign, it's very difficult to educate the public. You know, it was difficult enough to tell them where to put the stamp, let alone where you write in and how you write in.

Chall: This was the general campaign, after he lost the primary?

Wagner: That's right. So somebody had the idea of getting little golf pencils, with "Write-In Ellis Patterson" and having a card with two holes that you put the pencil through, pointing to the place for you to write. That's pretty detailed! [Laughs] We would have hundreds of volunteers putting little pencils through the holes! [Laughs]

The results were that he got ten thousand votes and the campaign cost us ten thousand dollars, so it was a dollar a vote! [Laughs]

Chall: How did you raise the money for a campaign of that kind?

Wagner: It was a labor of love. A lot of the independents, the Democratic club members, some of the NCPAC people, the Jewish Community Center people--we held many fund-raising events and received a few large donations. "Pat" raised much of the money himself.

[End side B, tape 1]

[Begin tape 2, side A]





Chall: Continuing '46--you lost, of course, or Patterson lost.

Wagner: We really had a marvelous coalition of union people. When I say "union" people, you must distinguish between some of the leadership of the AF of L and, at that time, all the leadership of the CIO, and the rank and file. There's quite a difference. There always has been. I met a great many people, and learned to recognize the integrity of some and the opportunism of others. I was beginning to make distinctions.

The issues that were established in that campaign became quite clear to me. This was during the time of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. I felt that at least my interests lay with peace efforts, and that any entanglements--well what's the word I want?--support by our government for governments abroad dealing with quid pro quo, or political strings attached was going to get us into trouble.

The groups that I had been working with in that campaign, and through the years, have taken some very unpopular and difficult positions in relation to the Establishment. By that I mean the Democratic Establishment. By that I mean the elected officials. For the most part--I'm a little ahead of myself, but I think I have to do that--I learned to separate the candidates from the movements that were involved with issues. To the extent that the two of them would come together, I would be interested in supporting them.

Just to support a candidate who was an endorsed candidate of the Democratic party, or who had the support of the hierarchy of the AF of L or the Democratic party, didn't impress me as far as working for them is concerned.

Chall: So you became concerned primarily with issues.

Wagner: And the movements and the communities that the issues would affect. That, of course, meant the poor people and the minority communities which are part of that poor community. Some of the young people--the veterans certainly, who were returning from the war. The families and particularly the mothers who had to work, and the child-care centers which were being terminated or at the least their appropriations were being terminated, and the growing pensioners' movement--but I'll get to that.

During the campaign, as I said, I met a lot of the CIO people, particularly. I'd known some of them through the NCPAC. Parenthetically--no, not parenthetically, but parallel--my marriage was really coming to an end. I felt that I wanted to continue to work, and I had had my first



Wagner: political paid job. I was telling some of the people that I wanted a job, and heard there was a committee called the National Committee to Win the Peace, or the Win the Peace Committee, which had an office out here.

One of the people in the CIO Political Action Committee had told me that they were looking for someone, that the woman who was there--the what in the committee?? The secretary!!--had gotten married, and she was leaving. So I went down and was interviewed by a man named Allen Metcalf, who was the director of the Win the Peace Committee. He said, "The pay isn't very good or regular," (but I was still married--barely)--and I said, "Well, I can try it for awhile, but I do have to get paid eventually."

So this was a little office on 206 South Spring Street. It was a one-room office where he sat [laughs]--the executive!--and [gesturing] I had my desk there, and then there was a mimeograph machine and a long worktable and one other thing. A bookcase. I think I had put that bookcase in, in this little office.

I didn't very much know what I was doing, but I was there to answer the phone and take letters. I'm not even sure what the committee did. I really am not sure what the committee did, because it was very short-lived. I was there for maybe three or four months when it sort of disbanded.

Jim Burford played a very large part.\* James Burford. He was the-- I think the title is director of the CIO Political Action Committee. I had worked closely with him. He had written leaflets and what not for some of these efforts on the OPA, and, of course worked with the Ellis Patterson write-in campaign committee.

#### Affiliation with the California Legislative Conference, 1947-1956

Wagner: I think it was he who mentioned this Win the Peace Committee job. I'm pretty sure it was. But at any rate, it was he who suggested that instead of giving up the Win the Peace office, that the Continuations Committee of the Statewide Legislative Conference--that was the name of it, at the time--use the office. This was during 1947. They wanted to rent this office is what I'm trying to say.

Chall: They had already organized?

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\*See appendix for James Burford's essay on the background of the California Legislative Conference



Wagner: Oh, yes. They had had their first statewide conference. I think the first one was in '46, wasn't it? I wasn't with it at that time. [Searches through files] Here it is. It was founded by Attorney General Robert W. Kenny and Bartley Crum. I'll read you this paragraph, which will tell you how that was organized. It said, "CLC was founded in 1946 by the then-Attorney General Robert W. Kenny and Bartley Crum, noted attorney." I can't give you this, because it's the only copy I just found.

Chall: We'll make a copy of it.\*

Wagner: "At the call of these distinguished leaders, 600 organizational representatives came to Sacramento to a Statewide Legislative Conference. Practically every major organization was represented. AF of L unions and councils, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods, Machinists, NAACP, Jewish organizations, Townsendites, veterans, parents, teachers, young people, farmers, and consumers."

At any rate it was Jim Burford who suggested that they were looking for an office in downtown Los Angeles, because they were going to hold a second statewide conference in Sacramento during February of 1947.

But I'm thinking of something else. [Searching through papers] Some time after the Sacramento conference the committee held a rally at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles to defeat the Taft-Hartley bill in 1947. I believe this was one of the action proposals to come out of the labor panel at the Sacramento conference. And later that year, after the Taft-Hartley bill was enacted into law, a special session of the California Legislative Conference was held in August. One of the main purposes of that special session was to organize for repeal of the Taft-Hartley law. This was August twenty-third and twenty-fourth. Out of it came a report entitled "Solidly, Constantly Together."

At any rate, they wanted an office, so would I help with the statewide conference in Sacramento?

Jim Burford introduced me to the co-chairman of the Legislative Conference at that time--Reuben W. Borough, who is dead now, and G.F. Irvine, also dead. Mr. Borough and his wife Madeleine--Reuben and Madeleine Borough--came down to the office and Jim Burford introduced

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\*Review of California Legislative Conference, 1956. See Appendix



Wagner: me to them. Madeleine and Rube were going to help organize the conference in Sacramento, as I recall, and they wanted me to follow through with the thousand and one details involved.

The first organizing I learned was from the Patterson campaign. But this rally to defeat the Taft-Hartley bill is where I really learned. I met a woman named Alice Orans. She had been a director of Social Services in the State Relief Administration, the SRA, as it was known in those days. I met Alice either through the Boroughs or Jim Burford.

Chall: He was really a major pinwheel on this.

Wagner: Had you met him before?

Chall: No, I'm just hearing about him now.

Wagner: Oh, Jim was the political action director of the most important organization at that time.

Chall: For the state of California, or was he for southern California?

Wagner: Definitely southern California. As a matter of fact, he's now very active in the ACLU down there. The Railroad Brotherhoods played quite a part in it, because Mr. Irvine was our co-chairman. They had a large office someplace near Main Street, a huge set of offices. I remember going down there, and Alice Orans had a long--I don't remember whether it was a large sheet of butcher paper or a roll of something--paper along the whole wall. She had listed categories--mailing, speakers, publicity, finances, organization--and she laid out the whole campaign, of the dates that something had to be done, who the organizations to be mailed to were, where the speakers would be sent, and so forth and so forth.

Chall: This was to defeat the Taft-Hartley bill?

Wagner: Yes. It was just magnificent. I really was developing a flair and a taste for organizing and for detail. I shall never forget that. I never used that particular kind of paper, but I've used large ledger sheets. If I died or was killed, anybody could see exactly what was happening. That was a magnificent rally at the Shrine! The only name I remember is Rollin McNitt, who was chairman of the Democratic County Committee, and who was quite a conservative man.





Wagner: They had all of the top people in organized labor, and indeed they should have. When somebody says, "How many seats do you think are in the Shrine?" today, I know exactly! [Laughs] Sixty-seven hundred and eight, I think. Every seat was filled.

That was my first effort to organize a mass meeting.

Chall: Were you working under her?

Wagner: She was there to help me and to help the Boroughs. There were people from all over, mostly the CIO unions, but some of the AFL unions. I can't remember the secretary--W.J. Bassett. I think he was the secretary at the time. I think he attended.

Chall: Secretary of what?

Wagner: Central Labor Council of Los Angeles. It's now called Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. You know, the top hierarchy of labor, and then, of course, some actors and probably the perennial guitarist and a pitchman to raise funds. I didn't feel very knowledgeable, but I was meticulous; and so I followed through.

Then this conference was organized.

Chall: The one called "Solidly Constantly Together"?

Wagner: Yes. [Laughs]

Chall: That was a major conference; 1214 accredited delegates.

Wagner: Yes. [Looking through papers] This was really extraordinary. I think the largest single block of delegates came from the Townsend organization. The next, of course, was from the labor groups. I guess that the law [Taft-Hartley] had already been passed, because it says here, "Only a few of the main recommendations of the panel are summarized here, repeal the Taft-Hartley law."

#### Conflicts with the Independent Progressive Party

Chall: Now it looked as if that organization [conference] was thinking seriously about where it was going with respect to the 1948 election. I noticed that there were some delegates from Wallace clubs. I wondered what happened to this organization in the 1948 election, which was a crucial kind of election. Progressives, I'm sure felt this way. Yes, there was a debate, and it was a very exciting one.



Chall: Mr. William A.P. White was interested in going and taking the Democratic party and pledging it to Henry Wallace.

Wagner: The Democratic party, as against Hugh Bryson, who had been a left-wing labor leader, an independent.

Chall: And his point of view was--?

Wagner: Well, as he says, "The two-party system has become a one-party system, and that party is the party of monopoly and reaction." His point was that we needed a new party.

Now, that set the stage. Some of the organizers of the Independent Progressive Party came to us, and they said, you're going to have this large aggregation of people from various organizations. We feel that it would be to our advantage to have an organizing meeting at a place the same day, not too far from where you will be. They just wanted us to know that they were going to do that.

Some of the people said, "That's fine."--who were for the third party. Others said they thought it would not be fair. My personal position was that I felt it would be an intrusion, but it was okay, because anybody has a right [to organize] and some of these people were my friends. I knew that we would have problems. They weren't asking my permission, but they were letting us know that this was going to take place.

Chall: So there was a special organizing meeting?

Wagner: There was a special organizing meeting. I don't remember where they held it.

Chall: Of the Independent Progressive Party? At that time?

Wagner: I think it was the organizing committee of the Independent Progressive Party. I was very uncomfortable with that, but I can understand why they would do that.

Chall: If you were the executive secretary--?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: --you were planning this meeting and the details and all the rest for the delegates there?

Wagner: Yes.



Chall: What about the matter of determining the policy? Even if it didn't really matter, they would organize anyway. Did they pose this question to Reuben Borough or Mr. Irvine, because they were nominally the chairmen?

Wagner: Yes, they did. But Rube Borough was one of the officers of the Independent Progressive Party after that. It was fine with him. As a matter of fact, he probably knew about it at the beginning.

Chall: So they just told you when they came?

Wagner: No, I was aware of it prior to the day of the conference. Oh, I wasn't that adamant. I was uncomfortable, but it was okay. I had no--what shall I say?--I knew that we would have problems. I could very well see that Rube was our chairman, and he was going to, I think, be their chairman. There was certainly an understanding. But I personally felt that I knew that problems would beset the organization, because we were non-partisan. Well, there were Republicans in the Legislative Conference; some small farmers, for example. But we took no positions on candidates. I knew that it would present a problem. The most we would do, that we agreed to formally, was to let the debate be held on the third party, as against Wallace in the Democratic party.

If you have any other question or comment on that...

Chall: What happened? What happened to the Legislative Conference? It did somehow manage to go on, despite the fact that it must have been rent by the 1948 election and the following years.

Wagner: Oh, yes. It suffered. Well, at any rate, this meeting was very, very successful. They set up legislative conferences in the key areas throughout the state; key districts throughout the state. They would be doing on a local level what we were on a statewide level. For example, we had the Central Labor Council of Orange County, with the local Grange there, and the local NAACP there, and the local unions there, and the local Townsend clubs there. They would work on legislation that was before the state legislature. Some Congress, but mainly the state.

So it was a very exciting coalition.



## Organization and Functions of the CLC

- Chall: Who kept all of these groups going, and pulled them all together to find out whether, in fact, they were more than just paper organizations in these counties?
- Wagner: We were in touch with them in southern California. In the beginning, there was a northern California executive secretary who left the conference to take another job. Her name was Catherine Corbett.
- Chall: So it didn't last long in northern California, this organization?
- Wagner: Yes, but in a different manner. I'll show you what I'm talking about regarding county organizations. They didn't have too many meetings, but groups were subscribing to our service of ON THE RECORD. It was a compilation of legislators' voting records on key issues, and other matters.

For example, in Orange County, there was a man by the name of C.E. Devine, who was secretary of the AFL Central Labor Council. He and a local Townsend person, and a local Grange person, and a local NAACP person (I believe)--they were the executive committee.

I would go down and talk with them. We would be in correspondence. They held a local legislative conference. We'd supply the information on the bills. In San Diego, there was a San Diego Legislative Conference. Sometimes we had real antagonisms from the local hierarchy, particularly from the AF of L.

The leadership of the AF of L, C.J. Haggerty--Neil Haggerty--was very hostile to the Legislative Conference. The main reason was that many of the unions were subsidizing us, so their dues and assessments were being split. I think the more important reason is that when their delegates would come to legislative conferences, or I would speak to unions on legislation, asking them to take action, it forced the state federation to at least... If they didn't take action, there was a lot of dissension in the unions that they were not doing very much on the legislative front, and would point to the political actions the Legislative Conference was taking.

Subsequently, and I will take much credit for it, organizationally, not personally, there have been greater lobbying efforts on the part of unions. In those days, it was just Neil Haggerty who would pound the pavements up there in Sacramento. Then I was there for several months at a time lobbying for child care centers, and pensions, and the programs that we had evolved through our panels. Did you look at it at all?





Chall: I did. I don't recall the panels.

Wagner: We had workshops on issues, in groups. There was a senior citizen workshop, and there was a housing workshop. You should ask me about me and housing. And then there were minorities and civil rights workshops. And then a program was developed, and I tried to implement that program. When Catherine Corbett was there, she and I did [reading] child care, public welfare, education, and unemployment. Eventually, we lobbied for those issues.

[End side A, tape 2]

[Begin tape 2, side B]

#### Working with the Legislature

Chall: Before the conference came the issues that you were going to work on in the legislature. How did that go? This was a time when Earl Warren was governor, and he did have a more progressive point of view in much of his legislation than many of the Republicans, I suppose.

Wagner: He? Not really. Certainly not on labor issues at that time. We didn't do well, really. Our action was to stop negative legislation, particularly in civil liberties, and anti-labor. My friends in the legislature--I could count them on one hand or maybe seven fingers!

Chall: Who were they?

Wagner: The man that had a hundred percent record, and really took chances, particularly in civil liberties, was Lester McMillan. He was from the liberal Beverly-Fairfax-Pico area. Henry Waxman deposed him. Glenn Anderson, who now is a congressman. A man named Edward Elliott, a young man from the downtown area. A man named Robert Condon, from up north, who became a congressman.

A one-term assemblyman, Joe C. Lewis, a farmer, small farmer. To a lesser extent, Augustus Hawkins, the congressman. Do you know who he is?

Chall: Yes.

Wagner: On one or another issue, a few of the others. In the state senate, it was George Miller, Jr., who died.



Chall: Now you're talking about civil rights, aren't you?

Wagner: Civil rights and civil liberties. FEPC.

Chall: Byron Rumford?

Wagner: Byron Rumford, yes. Not all the time. He was not in the known camp all the time. Certainly on civil rights, but not all the time on liberal labor issues, and not on civil liberties as such. For example, on loyalty oaths. You couldn't count on Rumford.

Chall: How many of these people could you count on for some of those issues?

Wagner: I think we could count on those.

Chall: Just those you mentioned before? Up to George Miller, Jr.?

Wagner: Through him. Yes.

Chall: Those were rough days for liberals.

Wagner: It was very cold in the halls of that legislature. Mr. Haggerty was really very hostile. It was not pleasant. I remember vaguely one AF of L convention. They were having a debate on a resolution to require that AF of L unions pull out of the conference. Some of our friends in the locals, particularly some of the carpenters and the painters, the cooks, the piledrivers--five or six unions--they were going to have a separate caucus to determine what to do. Anyway, Haggerty and a few of his people took the floor, and said that we were all Communists and we were trying to split the unions, and the money is not there, and that they had their own lobbying effort, and that the state federation has its own issues.

Chall: Bread and butter issues primarily?

Wagner: Yes, right. They voted that they may not contribute any more.

Chall: That was the beginning of peril?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: This was about 1950?

Wagner: '51, I guess. But we still went on.



- Chall: Now the Legislative Conference then had enough backing, enough money, a good enough name so that when you went into the halls of Congress, or when you went to speak before local groups, it was something, apparently, to be reckoned with. Who paid attention to you?
- Wagner: In the legislature?
- Chall: In the legislature and in the communities. I would think that legislators wanted to be elected again, but you had only a half-a-dozen out of something like 140 who were willing to stand and be counted.
- Wagner: Well, I'm saying that these I could actually count on. There are others on various issues.
- Chall: That you could persuade?
- Wagner: Oh yes. On the farm issues, child care. Well, child care was quite an issue, but pensions much more. I'll show you when we issued ON THE RECORD.
- Chall: So you were an important organization, at least in southern California.
- Wagner: In southern California it developed, yes. At first it was northern California. That's really where it began. Catherine Corbett and G.F. Irvine and many of the people from northern California. Then when I came on, at least there was somebody in southern California. So there was some continuity.
- Chall: How did the Democratic party as such look upon your activities? Did you try in any way to influence the platforms of the Democratic party? Or the state platform?
- Wagner: Yes. It was always a minority that did that. I remember in August--my! how time flies!--after I was married! [to Murry Wagner] in the summer of '54. Some of our friends in the Democratic party--I can think of a few right now from the unions; the unions in San Jose, and Petaluma, and in San Diego--some of the labor people who were on the state committee. This was the biennial--or was it annual--State Convention of the Democratic State Central Committee.
- Chall: What did they do about the party platform?
- Wagner: The outstanding debate that comes to mind was the stand taken by Assemblyman Joe Lewis, my farmer friend from Buttonwillow. He wanted the platform to reflect strong opposition to the Truman Doctrine and



Wagner: the Marshall Plan. I believe it cost him his re-election to the state assembly at the next election. His district was rather conservative and rural.

It was always the independent left of the Democratic party, insofar as--I hate those labels! They don't apply any more. They used to. They really don't. But in those days, as it was characterized--"one foot in and one foot out of the Democratic party."

That is to say, on the one hand every effort should be made to guarantee the implementation of the Democratic party platform on issues which would benefit our senior citizens, minorities, working people, and others. On the other, where the platform was silent on such issues as the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), or the Mundt-Nixon bill, or Universal Military Training (UMT), or other repressive measures, our thrust was to find bridges within the party so that official party policy would reflect opposition to these measures. We were also anxious of course to have included positive positions, like higher minimum wage, greater security for senior citizens, farm workers, unemployed, and so forth.

Chall: The Independent Progressive Party people were not in the Democratic party. Reuben Borough for example, how long did he stay as chairman of the conference at the same time that he was a member of the IPP?

Wagner: Only for a time. Only for a short time.

Chall: It didn't split your organization, so that it couldn't function during the years?

Wagner: I'm trying to think of when he pulled out because of that.

Chall: Pulled out of which?

Wagner: Of the Legislative Conference.

Chall: Because the IPP was presumed to be, and in some cases may have been, a front for the Communist Party, was this a problem in your organization?

Wagner: The IPP?

Chall: The IPP or the Communist Party.

Wagner: Of course we had problems with labels. You must remember the late '40s and early '50s were McCarthy years, federal and state loyalty oaths, the breakup of the powerful CIO, the Mundt-Nixon bill, HUAC,





Wagner: the Korean War... Some conference board members had joined the IPP; others stayed with the Democratic party. There were delegates to statewide conferences who were known members of the Communist Party and who also represented unions or community groups.

I personally had no problem with labels. Some of the most creative thinking on plans of action to either defeat or support several measures came from the Left--the IPP or the Communist Party. One of the women I admired and respected most--and still do incidentally--is Dorothy Healey. She was, at that time I believe, secretary of the local Communist Party. Brilliant, with fierce integrity, and deep compassion for people. In my opinion, there is no one in the mainstream of politics who deserves greater respect than Dorothy Healey. I learned a great deal from my friendship with her.

I was just looking to see who was the chairman at the time. [Looks through papers] They don't even mention the chairman.

Chall: The chairmen in 1947 were Reuben Borough and G.F. Irvine.

Wagner: Right. [Riffles papers, laughs] I'm embarrassed, you know, because Catherine and I just have our own names on the literature. We should have had the chairmen on here.

Chall: I have another co-chairman.

Wagner: Paul Major. He was in the Democratic party.

Effect of the Cold War: The Unions

Chall: I'll have to ask you later who all these people were--G.F. Irvine, Catherine Corbett.

I guess right now I'm trying to establish to what extent the organization--

Wagner: Was labelled? Is that what you're saying?

Chall: Well, two things--its influence in the state: on legislation, and with the Democratic party, and secondly, whether or not it was labelled, which would also influence how far you got with legislation and with the Democratic party.



Wagner: I'm trying to think of the year that the CIO split, that Philip Connelly, Slim Connelly, was the secretary-treasurer of the southern California CIO council. He was a very difficult man to work with but an extremely principled union man. I don't know whether he was a member of the Communist Party, or a supporter. He certainly didn't do anything to discourage any of the so-called progressive unions from remaining in the council. The steelworkers pulled out, saying that that there were Reds in the organization. Slim made no distinction. He was primarily a union man. He was a left-wing union man. He was probably a member of the Communist Party, because he married Dorothy Healey. I don't know for how long they were married.

I don't know if he was, and I'm not concerned. The point is that he became anathema to the right-wingers in the CIO.\* The steelworkers, under this despotic John Despol--a very reprehensible individual--led the attack, for the most part. He was a very reprehensible man.

Chall: Why was that?

Wagner: He was a liar. He was personally a boor. There were no saving graces, as far as I was concerned. He would come to conferences to disrupt. I'm not sure if he was a paid agent. There's been a lot of talk about that.

Chall: A paid agent of--?

Wagner: I don't know. Disrupters, whoever they were at the time, I don't know.

Chall: He generally was disruptive?

Wagner: Absolutely. You knew that when John Despol appeared at a conference--not only ours, but I've seen him at meetings of women's groups. I remember a particular one. He would just get up and ask an outlandish question, aimed to cast doubts, and just disrupt. At any rate, he was one of the main disrupters in the CIO. The Legislative Conference continued to have delegates from the CIO council, and people

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\*I'm inclined to believe that history has proven the Slim Connellys of that era correct. The fragmenting of the unions by the right-wing, like Humpty Dumpty, have never been able to be put back again. Their strength of unity has been considerably diminished. A few red-baiters of that era, like Paul Schrade of the UAW, have admitted that fact subsequently.



Wagner: from the so-called "progressive" unions, such as the United Electrical Workers, the furniture workers, the mine mill workers, the public workers--there must have been others. I can't recall. I'll think of them.

Anyway, through people like Despol, and probably because of a growing repressive climate in our state and nation, many unions pulled out, and therefore removed their subsidy, or their "sustainer," as we used to call it. And so it went with other groups. I think the local American Jewish Congress Chapter was in the hands of the national receivers at that time, because they had progressive leadership. Their money was tied up, and so their sustainer was cut.

The International Association of Machinists' state organization was a very large sustainer. John Fry was one of our fans, and persuaded all of the locals to sustain the conference. They had a statewide meeting; I guess the Haggerty people and whoever the machinist lobbyist was were there, and they too decided to disaffiliate. It was a very difficult time, during the cold war.

Chall: Wasn't this the period of the Levering Act, and Joseph McCarthy, and the loyalty oath--that general time?

Wagner: Oh, yes. I'll come to that. The local International Ladies' Garment Workers Union was in the hands of receivers, because there was progressive leadership out here. There was an overall effort. I haven't researched the statistics, but I have every reason to believe that there was an overview plan. Maybe the CIA, from what we know now.

They had to pull their sustainers. The Grange--I just think it was retrenchment on their part. Anything that smacked of controversy; and they didn't have too much money for legislation, and they were sort of on the way out in that area. I'm talking about some of the big hunks of money that were pulled out.

Chall: Yes, that you could see coming out.

Wagner: Right. Our board, with the exception of very few, took the position that we still had the Legislative Conference program, and we were going to continue, that we were not going to submit to a loyalty oath of who is eligible and who is not. We had left-wing unions, and we had all these other groups, but the money stopped, dried up.

Now, as far as the Progressive Party is concerned, the conference really took a back seat. The left generally worked very hard to educate and activate people in our state for the IPP candidates. It





Wagner: was felt that by giving the voters an alternative to the Cold War philosophy of both parties, perhaps the drift toward war could be halted or at least the tide could be stemmed. As for the CLC, the fact that we didn't endorse candidates or parties--even though Haggerty and Despol repeatedly said we did, "a front for the IPP" they said--relegated us to a low priority during election time. However, when you work with many groups, some issues get higher priorities at certain times than others. The Taft-Hartley bill was one such. All kinds of groups came to support the conference, all sorts of organizations, including Communist organizations. Some of the local Communist leaders expressed deep concern about the effects of the Taft-Hartley bill on labor unions. They were very helpful to me in many ways.

Parenthetically, I might add that during these years I had read a good deal about parallel history, repressive periods, about economics and alternative solutions to cyclical unemployment and poverty. And in my discussions with people like Dorothy Healey, I was impressed with the logic of a socialist system of government which conceivably could correct the tragic ills I was constantly fighting against--mainly on the legislative front.

#### The Loyalty Oath

Chall: What other issues were you able to gather people around--that many groups around--besides the Taft-Hartley Act?

Wagner: When the loyalty oath epidemic started, there were bills just for lawyers. Then there was the bill which would have required the loyalty oath of every licensed business and professional in California. I think there were something like 585 groups. My favorite are the funeral embalmers. They would have to sign loyalty oaths to guarantee that the people who were dead were dead. We wrote a song about it.\* They yacht brokers--everyone in the business and profession code--the doctors, of course.

We brought groups up to Sacramento. Some of the business and professional women, the wives of the doctors, and the lawyers--the lawyers were separate. There was a separate bill for them. But the doctors, accountants, the ophthalmologists, of course.

We helped the women organize the Women's Committee to Defeat the Burns-Tenney ills. That's the one that was the umbrella. We did it. When you say "Were we effective?" There's no question. When

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\*"They've Gone About as Fur as They Can Go". See appendix





Wagner: I say "we," I don't mean "me," I mean all of the groups. For whatever their reasons were, they just were not going to sign a loyalty oath. Maybe it was the old democratic spirit--with a small "d."

[Insert from beginning tape 3, side B]

The Women's Committee to Defeat the Burns-Tenney bills--mostly the wives of doctors and other professional people--raised lots of money, and they took planeloads to Sacramento, and the bill was defeated, and the women were so delighted with their efforts that they decided to continue. But they wanted to be independent. I said, "Why don't you name yourselves the LAW--Legislative Action for Women." They thought about it, and they said, "No, we think women should be first," so they organized Women for Legislative Action. Have you heard of that group?

Chall: I don't think so.

Wagner: Well, I think they have passed their heyday, although they're still in business. This was '52, '53 at the very latest.

Chall: Is that right? They've been in existence all these years?

Wagner: Oh, yes. They've changed, certainly. Most of those women are--well, it's been twenty-three years. They've gone and done many other things, and gotten much older. Some have died. But they're still watching legislation, and they are involved in almost anything that I consider important. Like the defeat of S1 [Senate Bill 1], and the bomber [B-1], and the SST, and other malicious bills.

Chall: They've been an important influence in southern California as a pressure group?

Wagner: A pressure group, yes. They were somewhat to the left of Women For. Do you know Women For?

Chall: Yes.

Wagner: They had more activists in their membership than Women For--letter-writing, lobbying, that sort of thing.

Chall: So there was a spinoff, then, from the California Legislative Conference, some groups that remained, or at least the idea--?

Wagner: The idea, right. [End inserted section]



Chall: Some of those people--I can imagine some morticians saying, "I am loyal, and why shouldn't I sign the oath?" There were so many people required to sign; it must have been difficult to organize some groups.

Wagner: It was amazing. It really was amazing. I don't have any material, but offhand, I'm sure this was likened to many of the efforts in early America, the Alien and Sedition Laws. I remember when we organized the campaign to defeat the Mundt-Nixon bill. There was enormous effort. Some of the conservative, strict constructionists were just opposed to having government intervention--"Who's to say that I'm not loyal?" And so they joined us with our newspaper ads, and lobbied with us in Sacramento and generally added to the outpouring of the people.

That's the kind of thing the Establishment was critical of--the hierarchy of the AF of L, and now some of the CIO; the steelworkers, the oil workers, the electrical workers. They organized another union. I think it's called the Independent (or International) Union of Electric Workers. The IUE instead of the UE, the counterpart. They didn't like this kind of grass-roots activity. That was really the base of the opposition. Truly, the labels were something else again. That really is the distinction, I think.

Chall: They didn't like it? Why didn't they like it?

Wagner: Because most of the deals, most of the legislation, most of the advocacy was done by one person, or two people in Sacramento--their paid advocates. They were not of the school of political action on the part of their membership, and certainly not by an outside group.

I remember, again, bringing busloads of people up to Sacramento on many issues, and [laughs] being coldly stared at by some of the professional advocates.

Chall: When you brought busloads of people, did you rally outside the State Capitol building, or send people in to lobby?

Wagner: We would have a conference at one of the large rooms in one of the hotels, and invite the legislators to come. They did come, because their constituents were there. We had conferences all over the state, and the constituents came, and they brought them [legislators] over. Sometimes not very readily, but they brought them over for lunch to be introduced. It was very effective.



Wagner: This was, again, anathema to some of the regulars, because it undermined their influence in legislative advocacy. You can understand that, I think. When a lay person comes from a district and asks a legislator to do something, it cuts the lobbyist's influence behind closed doors.

What evolved, eventually, when this split came and money dried up--we were having real problems. Again, you mention the IPP, because it's a political party. Much of the IPP leadership was very unhappy with us because we didn't endorse. We had a lot of friends in both organizations (Democratic party and IPP), and we felt that our usefulness was minimal at that time.

I remember having arguments, particularly with people in the hinterlands. I remember the Riverside conference. There were some very eager IPP-ers, and when they had their Legislative Conference, they passed out leaflets with endorsements. Many of the more conservative and cautious leaders of the AF of L left the Riverside Legislative Conference. There was no way I could control it, and I was furious with it.

There really wasn't too much love. I mean, we were friendly, but ours was an organization of issues. We did include every group that wanted to participate, and there was no loyalty oath on that score. Eason Monroe, who was eventually to become the director of the ACLU, left his post because he wouldn't sign the Levering Oath, and he became the director of the Federation to Repeal the Levering Act. It involved teachers and supporting groups all over the state. We were very involved in that.

It was repealed, eventually.

#### Studying and Reporting on Legislation

Wagner: So what we did with our volunteers was really... Well, let me show you some of the things that we did. We produced a summary called ON THE RECORD. Let me show you this.\* We would go through the pile of bills. We would give the education bills to teachers, we'd give the farm bills to farmers, labor to labor.

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\*Summary of Proposed Legislation introduced into the 1953 California State Legislature. See appendix.



Chall: I wondered, because these are so well developed. The people obviously were watching and working on the legislation.

Wagner: Right. Civil liberties to the ACLU or another group called the Civil Rights Congress, at the time. We digested the major bills. [Reading] "In a brief time, the unprecedented number of 5405 measures were introduced." They used to have what they called "spot bills." Did you ever hear of that?

Chall: Just skeleton bills with a name on it?

Wagner: Yes. The lobbyists then would pay each legislator to remove the bill, before they would develop it. Then there was a bill passed to outlaw "spot bills." At any rate, the labor people would pick the bills that were most crucial to them. The same process with civil rights bills, and education bills, and civil liberties bills. We distinguish, you know, between civil rights and civil liberties.

Chall: Civil rights has to do with minorities.

Wagner: Right. And health and welfare. We worked with some of the social work groups, the NASW [National Association of Social Workers] and a few others. Housing. We worked with the L.A. Housing Authority. I had the distinction of being called before the Burns Committee. Do you know what the Burns Committee was?\*

[End side B, tape 2]

[Begin tape 3, side A]

Chall: Now you were explaining how you studied or digested the bills in various areas that were important. Who made the decisions about whether you would or wouldn't support a bill, and to what extent? You couldn't be concerned with every single bill in every single area. How was this decision made?

Wagner: First was the summary. That is, a summary of the bills the respective groups thought most important to follow. The summary was prepared at the beginning of the session. Then, each week, based on the ones we were concerned with--I'll go into that--we sent the legislative

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\*Public Statement of Eleanor Raymond, 1952. See appendix.





Wagner: chairman of each of our constituent groups the digest of where the bill was and when it was going to be heard.\* They could either send a wire, visit if it was important enough, call to lobby on their legislation.

I did this [weekly digest], Leah, who now is dead, mailed the digest to respective groups and contributors.

I'll still try to find a list of our board of directors. They were representative of all the groups that came to the conference. I thought I saw it one place. I'll still look in one of these books. Here it is, in the report of the 1948 Session of the Legislative Conference.\*\*On the inside front cover it tells how it started, how it works, etc. On the last two pages it gives the executive committee, North and South. They made the decision. We had committees. We had an education committee. We had civil rights and civil liberties together.

We had--I don't remember what we called it--farm research committee, I think. We certainly had a labor committee, and one on health and welfare.

Chall: These were volunteer groups?

Wagner: These were volunteers from organizations, yes.

Chall: It was always a delegate group? Always a delegate responsibility?

Wagner: Yes, always.

Chall: And then you put out this weekly digest--

Wagner: [Laughs] That was a back-breaker!

Chall: Yes, it must have been.

Wagner: When Catherine Corbett stayed in Sacramento, because she lived in San Francisco--she would either send or phone this information. We also used the offices of people up there. I remember the ILWU--the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union--had a full-time person. The Friends' Committee on Legislation--Georges and Marjorie Webber. They were beautiful!

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\*Weekly Digest of Bills Scheduled for Committee Hearings. See appendix.

\*\*"Speaking For the People". See appendix.



Chall: Georges and Marjorie.

Wagner: Georges, with an "s." They were beautiful. He particularly was so helpful. They would--I'm trying to think whether they called or wrote us. I don't remember. Both, I suppose. Once in awhile, I would be in contact with the assemblyman's secretary on certain bills. There aren't too many, but to get that--! [Laughs]

Chall: Just to get the information I would think would be quite difficult. Did you have a staff?

Wagner: Yes, an administrative assistant, Leah Erb, and an excellent secretary, Miriam Friedman. Both of them dreadfully underpaid, but then, so was I!

See now, here's a final roundup, at the end of a session.

Chall: We have the summary at the beginning, the weekly bills scheduled for committee hearings, and then ON THE RECORD, the final roundup. This is the final roundup of the bills just before they're being readied for passage? I see, so you would know what has happened in committee.\*

Wagner: Approved, or buried in committee. They paid for the service, but there were fewer and fewer takers, so we'd give it away, and then have fund-raising events.

The other thing we did, and this was the most ambitious, and this is the thing that's in the libraries today, is the CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE ALMANAC.\* Did you see it?

Chall: I think that is an extraordinary bit of work! There was one copy in the library of the Institute of Governmental Studies, on the Berkeley campus.

Wagner: Which one? Oh, you said 1950. That wasn't as good. I'm going back through these things, and I'm dying. We had the whole thing done, and then we discovered it had the wrong titling, and they had to do this [correction] with five or six thousand copies. You know, this should have taught me something about life, that nothing is that important. I wanted to kill myself! [Laughs] Nothing is that important. Life goes on. [Shows copy of 1950 ALMANAC; section deals with ballot proposition number, title, brief summary of measure, and vote tally by counties. Apparently an error was made, either by typesetter or proof-reader, in that the number, title, etc. did not correspond with the actual vote tally. A gummed label-type reprint with correct information had to be hand-glued to the several thousand copies indicated--some five pages in each copy! E.W.]

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\*See appendix.



Chall: It does go on, but you surely had to correct that error.

Wagner: I had to correct it, but I took it so deeply! Really, I just didn't sleep. And so you correct it, but it doesn't become your life.

Chall: That's a remarkable piece of work. That [ALMANAC] looks like a combination of the work done by the League of Women Voters, the Friends' Committee on Legislation, and several other organizations. I don't know whether any of them put out anything as complete as that, now.

Wagner: No.

Chall: How did that get put together? How many volunteers, secretaries, and people worked on a thing like that? Working with you, I suppose.

Wagner: Yes, with me. I think in the early days when Catherine was still with us, most of the work was done up north. Later on it was done down here.

Chall: It looks as if it was southern California in total.

Wagner: Well, it's still California. [Looks through papers] You see what we say here, yes--"Thanks to all those in the office of the Registrar of Voters, the Social Sciences Department of the public library, and Congressional News Features." We had taken much of our information from all those sources. I just saw one of the women the other day who had done one of them for us, Patricia Hull. The newspaper woman who had put it all together. I haven't seen her for twenty-five years. But she didn't do most of the research. She just put it together, which was an enormous job.

Yes, we had many, many volunteer researchers and typists, doing different segments of the ALMANAC. As a matter of fact, I met my husband just briefly before then, as a contributor, because he was a businessman. He also was a researcher, and he took on some of the research on the voting records.

Chall: What is your husband's name?

Wagner: Murry Wagner. I'll tell you about him. We had another man, Dr. Fred Kugler. Do you know him? State College?

Chall: He is the historian of the CDC.

Wagner: That's right. He's a librarian.



Chall: Did he work with you on this?

Wagner: Oh, yes. Look what we did for the redistricting.

Chall: Oh, all the maps.\*

Wagner: All the maps. And then the election statistics.

Chall: That's an extraordinarily good job.

Wagner: And all the election statistics. We got a few ads, nothing commensurate with the costs involved.

Chall: How were you paid for that? Were there any extra funds for that?

Wagner: Well, we tried to, with the ads. We were always in debt. There were no paid staff on this. You're talking about the printing and the distribution?

The administrative secretary contacted the organizations for certain things, you know, finding out where a bill was, if they wanted service. It became a service organization. It became very tame! [Laughs]

Chall: All that material, all those statistics?

Wagner: That's right, very tame!

Chall: You didn't hold conferences on issues?

Wagner: Yes, we did. There's the 1956. [Indicates book]

Chall: 1956 was your last ALMANAC.

Wagner: Yes...A dollar! Can you imagine charging that little today?!

Chall: A dollar. What about the rest of them? How were they paid for?

Wagner: They were paid for. I have one of them to show you the pink slip on the order blank. We did have subscriptions to ON THE RECORD. That is another way we raised money.

Chall: It's really a remarkable document. Also, to be able to see who was running at any one time, the candidates and the votes.

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\*CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE ALMANAC, 1952, pages 97-107.





Wagner: Now, let me show you, dear. When we had a statewide conference-- most of these were our board. [Looking at a Call to a Conference in 1952 indicating names of sponsors]

Chall: Oh, good.

Wagner: But it is not a full list. This is the kind of thing that we did to invite groups to attend a statewide conference.

Chall: You had a statewide conference once a year?

Wagner: I think after awhile it was every two years. I think it was just on the even years. [Looking through papers] We met, but we didn't follow-up with reports like those in '47 and '48. We also issued Fact Sheets.

Chall: Yes, I've seen a few Fact Sheets. Here is a fact sheet on raising minimum wages. This one is "Employers Save Millions of Tax Dollars by Cutting Down Insurance Rates," written in 1955.

Wagner: This is a Fact Sheet on Universal Military Training, in 1952. [Looking through papers]

#### Campaigns on Selected Issues

Chall: Both state and federal issues were your concern. That makes it difficult--for volunteers to follow both.

Wagner: Well, we really followed very few bills. UMT [Universal Military Training], the Mundt-Nixon bill, the McCarran Act we did a tremendous... When I say campaign, it meant first of all getting the information. If it was the McCarran Act, we would go to--I don't remember who was doing immigration at that time.\* Mostly progressive groups would help us, like the L.A. Committee for the Protection of the Foreign-Born. Are you familiar with that?

Chall: No.

Wagner: Well, they did a remarkable job for mostly political deportees. But then they went into civil rights. David Hyun, a Korean deportee-- they worked and saved him from deportation to Korea.

Chall: David Hyun?

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\*McCarran Act flyer



Wagner: Hyun. [Spells it] He was on Terminal Island, simply because of an accident of birth. His father opposed Syngman Rhee. So they had information on immigration and naturalization where the McCarran Act was concerned. That was a very big campaign. We would try to build coalitions. We would get contributions, built up a long contributing list. Organizations, some, but more individuals. You know, people you can depend on through the years. We would put ads in the paper. We would hold conferences. We would have material to distribute to the memberships. That's the kind of thing that we did, on the political action side.

I can remember the people that helped on research. Betty Selden was a social worker. Many social workers did our research for us. I can see their faces, but I can't--

Chall: After hours?

Wagner: Yes, right. Many Democratic club people did research.

Chall: That's CDC, when you talk about Democratic clubs at that point?

Wagner: Yes, right.

Here's a pamphlet on the 1948 Statewide Legislative Conference. That's one of the first. That's in Fresno State College. Norman Pendleton was the co-chairman, and he was the director of the Townsend organization. Now, it says, "This report was prepared by Hal Dunleavy."\* He was with the housing something-or-other in San Francisco. He now--do you know him?

Chall: I know the name. I've noticed it before on another publication.

Wagner: He was very helpful to us. These, I have copies--so you may have this. [Passes papers]

Chall: Thank you.

Wagner: This is what I wanted to show you.\* We went to the city [Los Angeles] for one, one issue. The difficulty of getting voting records from the city council. You see, they don't have records. You have to go to the archives to find the date of the debate, and then find it somewhere. But they're not available like the legislature.

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\*Speaking for the People, Sept. 11 and 12, 1948. See appendix.



Chall: Is that true even today?

Wagner: I don't know.

Chall: I thought it was good that you were even able to get, those many years ago, a background on committees [of the state legislature]. I didn't think those were public.

Wagner: They're not!

Chall: In fact, I thought that they sometimes didn't even bother to take a vote.

Wagner: We had friends in the legislature.

Chall: I see, because you had voting records of committees that would be very difficult to get.

Wagner: Our friends in the legislature and their aides gave it to us.

Chall: So this ON THE RECORD of the Los Angeles City Council was--

Wagner: It took one man six months to get that information.

Chall: And you didn't do it ever again?

Wagner: Nope! [Laughs] It was just too difficult. So we did do local records, and also appearances before public utilities commissions.\*

Chall: That takes quite a bit of effort, and very special knowledge of economics, and taxation, and accounting procedures to do anything on public utilities. I was wondering how you managed to get somebody who could do that, so that they wouldn't laugh you off?

Wagner: I'm wondering too. I don't remember specifically, but the procedure in the others would probably indicate. Probably research from unions, because we worked very closely with some of the local unions.

Chall: So they would work with you if it was an issue of importance to them?

Wagner: Like the public workers, or whoever it was. You know, they're very knowledgeable. For example, recently I've been lobbying for KVST [Viewer Sponsored Television] before the L.A. County Board of Supervisors.

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\*Statement in Opposition to Application for Rate Increase by Southern California Gas Company. December 26, 1951. See appendix.



Wagner: While at the board, I saw a friend, Eleanor Glenn, from the Service Employees Union. She is one of the most knowledgeable women on economics, and taxation, and budget. That's the kind of assistance we used to get.

Now, I did much of the work for ON THE RECORD. I also wrote most of the statements, such as one, I recall, having to do with bus fares and services. I probably wrote the gas rate statement based on the research of others. Do you want to know some of the people?

#### Some Leaders of the CLC

Chall: Yes.

Wagner: Hallie Tenner. She had been involved in women's groups for a long time. I think I knew her first from the American Jewish Congress. She now, incidentally, is a member of the newly-created Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women.

Chall: And she was your organizational secretary in 1951?

Wagner: Yes. She got groups together to come down, and also to contact their local city fathers, and mothers, and whatever had to be done on a community basis.

Chall: Was she paid for that? Was it a paid job?

Wagner: Yes. Paul Major was and is an attorney. He was with the American Jewish Congress. I don't know what his title was there. He was involved with the Trial Lawyers Association, and what else? I think he was a member of the National Lawyers Guild at the time. [Continues looking through papers]

Chall: And Robert Kenny. He was chairman in '56. That's about the time you were going out of existence.

Wagner: He had been chairman for a number of years. You will recall that Bob Kenny was the first co-chairman who issued the call to the Statewide Legislative Conference in 1946. There were a few other chairmen in the interim through the years. Then he was elected again and remained our chairman to the end.





Chall: [Consults paper] I have co-chairmen Irvine and Major in 1952. Dates are probably in your almanacs for Kenny or others.

Wagner: No! That's what I'm embarrassed about. They only mention either my name or Catherine's. [Laughs] That wasn't very nice.

Chall: Here are Irvine and Major again in '52. In '55, Kenny.

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: Whether he was listed as chairman or not, or was chairman, I assume that he always played a leading role in the organization?

Wagner: Yes. He attended most of our conferences, and spoke.

Chall: Did he have much to do with the determination of policy or the issues?

Wagner: Oh, yes. Well, there was no one person that did. It was always through the statewide conference, through the panels and the recommendations. Then each--I guess it was the chairperson at each panel, or the recorder, who would report back, and the report would be adopted by the conference, as the CLC program. Then the program would be narrowed down, after legislation was introduced that would either support or oppose the program.

Education was the key. If there were bills to curtail or extend benefits, then they would determine which bills to concentrate on.

Chall: I see. So they were working all the time, those panels.

Wagner: Yes. The respective groups involved, yes. The whole thrust was that by supporting each others' programs, we would be more effective. They could be defeated or approved. That has been the thesis of my political life ever since. Everything I've done has been in relation to coalition to get more support, rather than to work on just a single issue. I'll go into that.

But you see, here you have some of the legislators that I mentioned [looking at advertisement in 1952 ALMANAC. Greetings from your State Legislators]. Johnny Evans. He voted much of the time with us. Oh, and Bill Rosenthal, who is now a judge. He was a very good friend of the conference. A very good friend! He interceded for us all the time. So was George Collins. Yes, I've forgotten about him. He's been away for so long.



Wagner: You had to be, you know, pretty independent to support us after awhile, because of the political action that we took, and really making a lot of noise.

[Questions and answers added during editing]

Chall: Are there other leaders you'd like to talk about? And could you tell me something about your colleague Catherine Corbett.

Wagner: I admired many qualities about Catherine--"Kaki" she was affectionately called. She had a very quick mind, was quite articulate and had a great deal of stamina. She came to southern California after awhile, worked for the Friends Committee on Legislation, then became business manager, I believe, of KPFK, Pacifica Foundation. I had heard some disturbing rumors that she appeared in Executive Session before HUAC some time later as a friendly witness. I never checked that out however. I lost track of her but I know she went back to school and received a doctorate in public administration.

G.F. Irvine, our northern California co-chairman, had been, as I recall, secretary-treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen. George was tough--and gentle--always available and had absolutely no use for opportunists. He died many years ago.

Reuben W. Borough was a former public works commissioner, a newspaper reporter, and a fierce advocate of public ownership of utilities for many years. There's a story about Rube that, when he was public utilities commissioner, he would ride the garbage trucks with the driver to determine for himself whether a proposed economy measure was going to be feasible: that is, whether one man instead of two could adequately do the job. He decided he could not. He had a shock of white hair which never would lie down neatly, and when he delivered his fiery speeches on exploitation, his hair seemed to give emphasis to his words. He died a few years ago, at about eighty-five years of age.

Another board member I particularly admired was Earl Walter, now dead for many years. He was with the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) in its early days. What was so special about Earl was his quiet, mild-mannered personality. But inside, he was strong and a brilliant leader of his people in the black community. His wife, Mildred, is also an exceptional person. She was an elementary school teacher, became a writer of children's books, a book reviewer for the Los Angeles Times, and an articulate speaker. She became a very impressive spokesperson for the ACLU at Board of Education meetings and other education groups. Like her late husband, she is soft-spoken



Wagner: and intense and has a fierce commitment to the black people and their history. Mildred was on the CLR board, much later of course, before she left for Denver, Colorado.

#### More on Financing the CLC

Wagner: You wanted to know how we sustained ourselves? We had the most elegant annual affair. It was called the Annual Thanksgiving Ball. [Looking at invitation to Fifth Annual Thanksgiving Ball] Let's see, what year was this? I bet I don't even have a year on it. No. These were the days I didn't put the year on. [Laughs] This was one of the last ones, though. Oh, yes. This was about--I was pregnant at the time, so it was in '55.

Chall: That was one of your last Thanksgiving Ball affairs?

Wagner: Yes. That wasn't the most elegant, but some of the previous ones were. We would get twelve, fifteen hundred people and have top entertainment. The Hall Johnson Choir, I remember. We'd make several thousands of dollars. That was the major fund-raising annual event. It cost a dollar and a half; anybody could come, and did, and know they would have a grand time, and support us.

Then we'd have a pitch, and make several thousands of dollars, There were such warm, friendly feelings. It was beautiful. Vic Shapiro designed the invitations for us.

We would send this to organizations to support ON THE RECORD. [Shows another publicity leaflet "Throw the Spotlight ON."]

Chall: Two dollars a year was not much of a charge for all that work!

Wagner: [Laughs] Right. We put out special issues material. This is one on the propositions. Voters Watch Out!\*

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\*See appendix.



## Final Years of the CLC

Chall: I ought to find out what happened in 1956. Did the money dry up?

Wagner: I have it in here for you, this review.\*

Chall: Okay, good. Then I won't ask you. I'll just put it in the appendix.

Wagner: No, it doesn't say that it dried up. I would frankly say, it was really an uphill battle by then. Almost--well, there were very few groups with any money that could support us. There was a group called the Southland Jewish Organization, which is a vital political activist group, or was. They are no longer in existence. They would contribute \$100 a month, which was a lot in those days. The ILGWU contributed \$100 a month. That was a lot of money. Several unions. Most of them had either no money, or they were not permitted to, or they were dissolved, or they were in the hands of receivers. There was just too much work to do, and very little remuneration.

[End side A, tape 3]

[Begin tape 3, side B]

Wagner: I hadn't been paid in a long, long time, but I had some money at the end of my marriage--not much--and I had just about run out of it. I had married recently again and I just had to evaluate--not for myself, really--but truly, was there still a need? It had to be answered by many, many people.

There still, I must say, were many people who were part of the conference, but groups that just didn't have money any more. They were poverty groups.

I posed the problems here [in the Review]. This was in September of '56. My son was born on February 12, '56. And because of that historic date his godfather Vic Shapiro insisted that Lincoln be included in his name. And so he was named Daniel Lincoln Wagner.

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\*Review of California Legislative Conference; Report to Advisory Board, September, 1956. See appendix.





Wagner: There was someone who took my place only for a short time, she said, and it truly was a short time. The work was overwhelming. She didn't know what to do about this kind of thing. I decided that I couldn't do it. Other things had taken precedence in my life. It was a loss, and everybody said it would be a loss, and particularly today. Although you don't have the kind of single-issues groups, and people are doing their own lobbying--I don't know. It's a point I'd like to think about and discuss at some other time, whether there is even the possibility of a non-partisan coalition on a continuing basis.

But there is, because of my next organization! [Laughs] So that's really it. There wasn't too much else. It was a tremendous time. I don't have files on the issue campaigns, which were exciting.

Chall: What did the board decide on the basis of your review? How did the organization agree to phase out?

Wagner: They had no choice. The organization had been starved financially--one of the casualties of the cold war, I have said. I shall always love the few groups that remained to the end--poor, courageous and loyal. I remember speaking with Carey McWilliams--who attended a few fund-raising affairs as guest speaker and who admired the conference very much--"the cold war couldn't afford an effective coalition like yours," he said.

Chall: What about the CDC? To what extent was there a dovetailing of persons and issues with the CDC?

Wagner: Issues and persons?

Chall: I don't know whether there was such a dovetailing, or whether you just went on your own, and they went on their own.

Wagner: The CDC was started in '53.

Chall: They did endorse candidates, and you didn't, but they took positions on issues.

Wagner: If there were organizational people, and there were, you know, in CDC, they were people from mostly the middle class. There were very few minorities; although there were some clubs. I remember some farmers--up in, not Redding but one of those places, who organized a Democratic club. Down in Orange County, some of the labor people organized Democratic clubs. So in that sense, I'm sure that Democratic clubs came to our conferences, but there wasn't any organic unity, or that kind of thing.



[Question and answer added during editing]

- Chall: Early in the interview you said, "You should ask me about me and housing." Now I'm asking. What about you and housing, aside from the fact that it brought you before the Senate Committee on Un-American Activities?
- Wagner: That's what I had reference to, my appearance before the "little HUAC" as we called it--in executive session. However, what I think I was referring to also was the campaign of the Los Angeles Housing Authority for much-needed funds. I believe they were seeking an appropriation from the city council and had included dozens of community and labor groups in their presentation before the council. The campaign was organized by Frank Wilkinson who was the assistant to the executive director of the Authority, Howard Holtzendorff. At any rate, I've always thought that my appearance before the Senate Un-American Activities Committee was brought about by Councilman Ed Davenport, a boor of a man, one of the most reactionary public officials ever. I had written a scathing letter to him and, I think, sent copies to the press. The issue is rather vague now, but it had to do with his open racism and some shocking comment he had made to Councilman Ed Roybal on the housing issue. Roybal, as you probably know, is of Spanish ancestry. Parenthetically, several years later Frank Wilkinson went to jail on a First Amendment issue.

#### Evaluation of the Woman's Role

- Chall: Now, in all of those years when you were executive secretary--
- Wagner: Now, don't forget the "executive." [Laughs] Bottlewasher!
- Chall: What about your relationships with the men who were part of this organization? Was there any feeling that what you did was considered "secretarial" work, and not valued by them?
- Wagner: Well, yes. I certainly think so. Where Rube Borough was concerned-- he was a very colorful, independent radical. He was a public works commissioner years ago. He was appointed by Mayor Bowron. He was a socialist, and he did almost nothing except speak--very well--at conferences. He would be a spokesperson when needed, but didn't prepare any material. Paul Major--I wrote every speech he ever made. He did nothing. But he was articulate, and he was a good image. I was very proud of him.



Wagner: When he appeared before the Public Utilities Commission he would read the statement that I wrote, and I used to resent that tremendously! Absolutely!

Chall: Would they say, "Thank you. You did a fine job"?

Wagner: Oh, yes. They would. He wouldn't say anything about the speeches. He always took credit for them. He'd get tremendous applause. I became, and have become, quite a good political writer. I've done interesting position papers, and would appear, for Californians for Liberal Representation, before commissions and committees.

During my years with the California Legislative Conference, I was a popular speaker on legislation. There were very few people at that time, in southern California, particularly, because Catherine spoke in northern California. I spoke to all kinds of groups--the chambers of commerce, the League of Women Voters, the progressive Jewish organizations, all kinds of groups--on legislation. My chairman, Paul Major, really did nothing. I was very resentful.

Bob Kenny was different.\* I leaned on him for advice, for political profiles. He had a sense of the politics of the situation second to none. As a matter of fact, nationally he's probably the outstanding, or was the outstanding constitutional lawyer. Pat Brown, as governor, used to ask his advice and his opinion on legislation and the law. I didn't expect anything more of Bob. He really had one of the finest minds, and was one of the most principled, courageous individuals.

He gave up his political career, really. He had the kind of integrity I think is very rare. He was very devoted to social change and to progressive leadership.

The yardstick for integrity in the Cold War days was whether or not one needed to Red-bait, or to disclaim. He never did. He never was a joiner, but he never did. That was a very welcome, refreshing change in politics. You can't say that about most of the candidates and public officials, in those days.

But true, I was very resentful. That went on in other efforts. You know, resentful on the one hand, and yet I chose to do it. I just have become a stickler for detail and perfection that has been very valuable, but also very enervating and resentful-making. [Laughs] Of my own choosing! Nobody told me to!

\*"Whimsical Warrior of State Politics", by Phil Kerby. See appendix.





Chall: Some people say that that's the women's field in politics, that they're better on issues than they are as campaigners or as candidates, unless issue-oriented. And that their issues generally are on the basis of morals, moral principles rather than the nitty-gritty of politics--winning. In an organization like yours, when you were meeting men and women on many different levels, I wonder how they viewed the work that you were doing, and as a woman, how you felt about it? Maybe some women never thought about these matters until recently.

Wagner: [Sighs] Well, there were almost ever-present--even in those days, with the exception of the Townsend movement, with the pensioners over eighty, [laughs] but even there--there was always a consciousness of the sex difference. The oblique efforts at making a pass. Some were not so oblique, particularly with a few of the legislators. It was always present. I was always aware that my work was depreciated, but somehow I think they felt I was peculiar because I would do so much work. It was a strange situation. I'm sure, at the time, it was a substitute.

But I just had an insight, Malca, that the reason perhaps that women had not been able--or rather, willing, not able, willing--to be candidates until recently, and to be in the fray, is that it meant a confrontation with a man. The intimidation had been so overwhelming that it was kind of scary. You can even have a psychological aspect of this, as "confronting Daddy," your father or brother.

At any rate, a male overt aggressive figure could be very intimidating.

Chall: But a woman's place was not generally supposed to be in politics until recently, and maybe in many cases it is still not supposed to be there. But you weren't married at the time, so that nobody could make you feel that your place was not there. Did you feel that married women were generally volunteers, and that this was a role that they accepted?

Wagner: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I was married when I first went into the--well, I was married when I was with the NCPAC and the OPA effort and the Ellis Patterson write-in campaign. I always felt I had to hurry home, and when I didn't, I felt very guilty and apologetic. My efforts were certainly--maybe not pooh-poohed--but they were underestimated, and they weren't appreciated by my first husband.

When I was married in 1954, I had been, of course, very involved. My husband respected my role very much. But as our marriage continued, there were great resentments.





Chall: On his part?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: Because of the time that you spent?

Wagner: He was ambivalent. The time; and the time that I was not busy, I was so tired. Time away and time at home, I was always on the phone or writing a paper. He was ambivalent because he really did admire me and admire the work I do, but he wanted his wife [laughs] and the mother of his child.

I'm sure there were many things that I left undone, as far as attending to household duties, although I've been very fortunate that we've had our housekeeper Mrs. Chapple for most of our married life. I was in business for awhile. I was in the building business. [Laughs] I said if we could continue to keep our splendid housekeeper, I'd work in our business, so that my salary would go to pay for my housekeeper. I'd rather do that than be in the house.

But there were needs above and beyond that. My child and also Mrs. Chapple herself, and my husband. He'd get very annoyed when I'd come home. "You don't even care about your house or your child when things go wrong." That was true. My preoccupation was almost a life pattern; my concern, my direction, and my preoccupation was out there with what I was doing. I have a lot of thoughts about that now.

Chall: But that's a choice, this balancing, that a career woman would have to make. Do you think your son suffered any from that?

Wagner: Not really. He's an excellent young man. In his early years, he suffered, as a child in school. I don't know whether that was it, or that he just found the school system very dull, being a very bright young man. But we have a fine relationship. I would say I would do it a little differently. I would be a little more available.

Chall: But you would still have a career?

Wagner: They were very rich. These years were very rich. I feel I wished I could have dispersed some of the knowledge and the information and the how-to-do among more people. But I was always up, you know, the executive secretary or the executive director. I didn't have enough contact down below to train a lot of people, or time, or resources.

Chall: Organizing them?



- Wagner: To delegate some of the duties. That's always been a problem. I think that is a problem of many people.
- Chall: You feel that you didn't pass on some of the knowledge that you'd acquired so that the work could go on in similar form?
- Wagner: Possibly. I'm not sure that our objective political situation would warrant that. It would have taken less of a toll on me had I been able to do that.
- Chall: Were you unable to do it because of the work, or because that's your nature?
- Wagner: I think both. We couldn't pay anybody, in addition. That's probably the main reason. Secondly, the people that we did pay--I just always was riding herd, because it wasn't quite good enough, quite check up, quite follow up enough. I have a tendency to downgrade myself. I wasn't too bad! [Laughter]
- Chall: I would imagine not. Do you find in your campaigning, and whatever you've done, in this particular type of activity [coalition politics], that men and women work differently, that they operate in a different way, at different levels? If so, what is the difference?
- Wagner: It also depends upon whom. I'm thinking of a wonderful man. His name is Jack Berman. I'm not sure of the time exactly, but he was probably executive secretary of the Independent Progressive Party. I knew him just prior to that, when he was with some Democratic club in Boyle Heights. Jack is an extraordinary man, with the kind of political insight very few people have. Of course, in his organization he had lots of people around. He was, and still is, with CLR. [Californians for Liberal Representation] He would chair the meetings, and recommend policy brilliantly, but he did very little of the work. He would, once in awhile, if I wasn't available, or said I couldn't, or whatever, and he did it well. But as long as I was around, I did it.

I must say, however, that the one thing I missed in our relationship all these years--and we were in several organizations together--was that he never, but never, validated me or my work. I got the courage to mention this to him recently, in connection with a KVST community meeting. "Aw, c'mon Elly, you know I love you and appreciate what you've done through the years; it's just not my style to tell you." I haven't figured out why it was so important to me, that he acknowledge my efforts. I sure used to tell him--every chance I got!



Wagner: Now I am out of CLR, and Jack is trying to hold it together, and he's doing almost everything himself. He won't delegate. It's kind of an interesting switch. As long as I was there, he was the policy-maker, and I was the follow-througher. Now he's doing both. And he's just had a stroke. But he's doing fine.

On the other hand, I've noticed many men in similar positions who would not undertake it unless they had a secretary.

Chall: And have you noticed that women would, if they didn't have a secretary?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: Women are really willing to get in there and work harder on detailed matters, more than men?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: Do they hold up as well? Is there a difference in the way they accommodate themselves to tension? I mean, the kinds of work you did, meeting deadlines and setting up conferences, publishing ON THE RECORD and the almanacs and all the rest of it--preparing for conferences and election campaigns. That takes a great deal of effort.

Wagner: And stamina.

Chall: And stamina, and tension. Do men--and I don't know too much about this kind of organization, but I'm thinking of political campaigns, too--are the men able to hold up physically and emotionally better in tense campaign situations than the women? Or does that depend on the man or the woman?

Wagner: I don't think it's a sex distinction. I'm thinking of one of the coolest men I know, Maurice Weiner, who until recently was the deputy mayor in Los Angeles. He was the executive director of CLR. Maury can stand up under the greatest tension and duress, and be perfectly warm and gracious at all times. This is his life. He is not married. He has a philosophy. He, of course, has secretaries, but he works long, long, long hours, and does personal investigations, when necessary, in the field and does not delegate to subordinates some of the mayor's more important assignments at all times.





- Wagner: There are a couple of other such. On the other hand, in KVST, we had two managers, one of whom was overwhelmed by the problems and had to quit under fire. A third one, very recently, was able to take all kinds of enormous obstacles, and deal with them. So I don't think there is a sex distinction.
- Chall: How about women? Have you seen women under the same kind of pressure? You've seen women in campaigns, I imagine, political campaigns.
- Wagner: Oh, yes.
- Chall: How did you feel about the way they went into it?
- Wagner: Political campaigns--well, Ann Marcus has managed some important campaigns. I'm not sure that she was the overall titular head, but she had a large responsibility--Julian Nava, Wilson Riles, and other people. She was able to manage very well, very cool. There are two women in the ACLU. These aren't political campaigns, but they have all kinds of issue campaigns. Ramona Ripston is the executive director in southern California, and she is on the trail all the time. She gets sick intermittently. The other one is a very close friend, Ruth Abraham, who is legislative coordinator and chapter chairman. (Chairperson? That's something else. I don't go for all of this! [Laughs])
- She is responsible for thirty-six chapters in southern California.
- Chall: Chapters of--?
- Wagner: ACLU. She works tirelessly, in addition to being legislative coordinator. She has lots of energy. She now gets tired more easily because she's older. She's been at it for a long time.
- Chall: Are these women married, and do they have a double life?
- Wagner: Ramona Ripston is not married, after having several divorces probably because of the time she spends on the job. Ruth is married very happily, although her husband also is ambivalent about the extraordinary time and energy she spends. But she still goes about her business, and has to rest every so often. But she is indefatigable.

So the answer to your question is, I think, that I don't know. I think, on balance, the women tend to do more themselves. Not necessarily work longer hours, but do more themselves. I guess the extent to which they do hold up, and can function freely, would depend





Wagner: on their household situations and the support they receive from their families. I think so. Are we going to go on to my next endeavor?

Chall: Let's see. It's four-thirty.

Wagner: Oh my!

Chall: I think we've just about covered it. I'll ask you one more question before this tape runs out. What about women in elected political office and administrative political office? Are you interested in seeing more women in office? Would you work to support more women in office? Do you think the time has come? Do you think it's important that they be there, is really what I'm asking. Does it matter that much?

Wagner: Yes, yes. I think it matters for many reasons. Certainly on the issues. The obvious one, of course, is the question of war or peace, and the military budget.

Chall: Do you think women would look at it differently?

Wagner: I don't think that all women would, nor have they. I think they would be more suggestible, and subject to influence by other women, than men. Again, their own station in life. I think the record so far as shown in Congress, for example, that our black women in Congress are much more consistent in supporting issues for peace and education and civil liberties --- Barbara Jordan, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Shirley Chisholm. Of course a most outstanding champion of peace and justice and women's rights is, in my opinion, Bella Abzug. But because she's a woman her style seems to offend non-boat rockers, people who still cherish the image of passive womanhood. Another reason I think women elected to office would respond to public pressure, if you will, is that in many ways they have been an oppressed minority and can empathize more readily with social needs: health, housing, education, consumer protection, job opportunities. But I also feel that, because the arena of government is still considered, by and large, to be a man's domain, a woman must have an exceptionally positive self-image to enter politics as a candidate.

[End side B, tape 3]



## III INTERIM EXPERIENCES: POLITICS AND BUSINESS, 1955-1962

[Taping continues after dinner]

[Begin tape 4, side A]

The Bellevue Democratic Club

Chall: Tell me about your experiences with the CDC. Were you at the organizing conference in Asilomar?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: The first organizing; "What's Wrong With the Democratic Party?" was the theme.

Wagner: Right. James Roosevelt and Senator George Miller Jr. I'm not sure if it was December of '52 or January of '53, but it was after the Stevenson debacle.\* I was there from the California Legislative Conference as an observer. I don't recall that I was a member of any club at that time. I just don't recall that. At any rate, I was an observer, and I was fascinated with the idea that someone from a county committee or a club movement in San Mateo presented, what he called the San Mateo Plan.

I would really prefer that you get all the details from one of the leaders of the organizing movement. But I do recall the San Mateo Plan, which was the process of a pre-primary endorsing convention. Where all of the Democratic candidates running for a particular office could seek endorsement. Then, after the vote was taken by the club delegates and one candidate received their endorsement, they could rally around that candidate for maximum support. Those not endorsed by the convention would drop out. They adopted that San Mateo Plan.

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\*January, 1953.



Wagner: I was still involved with my organization, but I was certainly very interested. Since I was in the business of legislation, I became sort of an at-large legislative chairman in my district, and sat on one of the statewide legislative committees. Actually, it was a statewide legislative committee of the CDC. I just concerned myself with legislation.

A year later, I was married and we lived in a little neighborhood not too far on the other side of the tracks. There was an abandoned reservoir across the street, and we got a notice saying there was going to be a public hearing because there was talk of turning this into a dump. My husband was very concerned about it and so he called together--through the process of our mapping out a little leaflet, and having some children distribute it to the property owners around the community--a meeting at our house to discuss this. I thought ten, fifteen people would come.

There were sixty-five property owners! That's an issue that concerned them, because there were houses on the periphery of this abandoned reservoir, and it was like a bowl where sounds would reverberate. At any rate, that started a magnificent community campaign. One of the main streets in the area was Bellevue. Bellevue Avenue, I guess it was. So we set up, with the property owners, the Bellevue Improvement Association, Murry Wagner, president.

It was really a fascinating campaign. I have files of it. I was, at that point, an aide to Murry, particularly because of my pregnant condition. [Laughs] But he and other committee members attended city planning committee meetings, planning commission hearings, city council hearings, television--all kinds of things. The councilman, at that time, Ransom Callicott, came to our house.

The promises that were made were that the reservoir would become a dump, but only of non-combustibles for a limited time, under the jurisdiction of the public works department, after which it would be turned over to the parks and recreation department and made into a park. Indeed, that's what happened. In less time than they had said it would, it was made into a park. I think it was called Bellevue Park. But the people in the area called it the Wagner Park. [Laughter]

Our house was situated on a corner, and intermittently, it was--oh, golly the districts have changed so much--the Twenty-fourth Congressional District headquarters, or the Silverlake headquarters (we always had a sign on our lawn--of the Democratic party). But more than anything, it was campaign headquarters for George Brown, George Brown, Jr. He was an assemblyman, and then he was running for Congress. But that's another story.





Chall: That was later.

Wagner: Well, that was in '62. But before that, there were CDC club-endorsed candidates George Danielson at one time, and David Roberti for assembly. I don't recall the times, exactly.

Chall: In '56?

Wagner: Yes, this is '56. Danny was born in '56. So I was preoccupied with that, and then Murry was with the Bellevue Improvement Association, although he was--well, I'm kind of overlapping.

Chall: But it was all headquartered in your house there?

Wagner: Oh, yes, all of it. All the club meetings. The first president was a Chicano, because our area was a mixed area of Asian, and Mexican-American, and some black people. Our club really was an integrated club. Even Jewish people! A Mexican-American was its first president, Joe Flores. Murry Wagner was its second president. When he became less active in the club, I became president.

That's after the fact. After the Bellevue Improvement Association achieved its goals, we took the lists of the community participants (by that time, several hundred), and we went down to the registrar of voters' office and we checked the Democrats. We called together a meeting to organize a Democratic club, out of the Bellevue Improvement Association Democrats. That really, as you can see--the genesis of that club came out of a community issue. That is the best kind of a club, not just registered Democrats, but people who have been involved.

That was exciting. The first name of the club was the Bellevue Dayton Heights Democratic Club. We shortened it to the Bellevue Democratic Club. There was a Dayton Heights Elementary School, and we had many of the parents from there. That was, I would say, about 1958. That was the year that Pat Brown was elected, I believe.

Chall: Yes, it was.

Wagner: There was a great deal of energy and effort in that campaign. But we were always interested in one of the propositions, and they all now run together in my mind--a measure to repeal the Rumford Act (that was Proposition 14), and the taxation issues. But the Bellevue Democratic Club was comprised mainly, at the beginning, of small property owners on our hill, and then down below they were poor working people, Mexican-Americans, and black, and poor white people.





Wagner: There were really a lot of hard times through the years. The club movement would ascend and descend. There were times when we had only five people attend and felt there was no use, why don't we just disband. It was our feeling, two or three of us at least, that at least you had a structure. There would come a time again when there would be a need for our club in the community. So we really held on, and indeed, from time to time it came to life. We held all the cause parties, all the fund-raising parties at our home. It was a wonderful old, old house.

So that was my life at that time; from the legislative conference, which had its dying gasps in the middle of '56, and early '57. Then we got this notice around about '56, when Danny was born. That's my landmark.

#### Construction Enterprise

Wagner: In the meantime, about in '58, I also was involved in a construction business-Dyna Construction Company, Incorporated.

Chall: How did that come about?

Wagner: Well, I mentioned the name of David Hyun who had become an immigration case through the accident of birth. His father was, I think, in one of the governmental bodies in Korea, which had opposed Syngman Rhee. David was born in Korea. His older brother was more fortunate. He was born in Hawaii, so he was an American citizen. At any rate, they wanted David back in Korea, and they had said they would try him there.

He lived in our neighborhood, and we became friends. He was an architect. He had an idea that sounded interesting to me at that time. It was to develop what they call limited partnerships--find investors, to build apartment buildings, rent them, and then sell them, at which time we would get our money and the investors would get theirs. In the meantime, we received no money for our efforts--just for venture capital.

David developed the design for the buildings. I found the property. My husband and David Hyun's brother, Peter, found the investors. It was very hard to get investors. Murry developed bleeding ulcers from the frustrations involved. I worked with David on the construction and with the sub-contractors. I rented the apartments, and then we tried to sell the buildings.



Wagner: But it was the worst time in the world, because financing was at its weakest, and poorest, and ugliest; but I learned a lot about construction. We also did some remodeling during the time. I learned something about business and contracts. That's what I did most of the time. The remaining time, I worked with a club. I think at the time there was another president.

At any rate, that was just another phase, [laughs] you know, quite different. That was aborted in '61.

Chall: You only built the one series of houses?

Wagner: No, we built two--one ten-unit, one twenty-four-unit; and then we did some remodeling of private residences, while waiting for somebody to buy the buildings. We also built two or three private homes. I worked with the sub-contractors, so I was quite on the other side! [Laughs] It was an interesting experience along the way.



## IV SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT: THE SECOND DECADE, 1962-1972

Affiliation with Californians for Liberal Representation

## Background of the Organization

Wagner: There was a movement called the Committee of 1000 that was quite short-lived.\* I wasn't part of it, but we'll get to that. There were people from Berkeley--Tom Winnett. Do you know Tom Winnett?

Chall: No.

Wagner: And Marshall Windmiller, Professor Windmiller.

Chall: Oh, yes. I have heard of him.

Wagner: The Liberal Democrat. That was the name of their publication which was published in San Francisco. Then a couple of people down here, who were interested in it--Irwin Levin, who now is one of the co-owners of the Social Studies School Service. He was a Young Democrat at the time, and I think even before Rick Tuttle. Howard Berman was a Young Democrat, and Henry Waxman. I think Henry was the president of the CFYD [California Federation of Young Democrats], and then Howard Berman succeeded him. I think Rick Tuttle succeeded him.

Chall: I see. Rick Tuttle was brought in through the Young Democrats.

Wagner: Yes. Oh yes, in 1962, George Brown and Ed Roybal--does that name mean anything to you?--were running for Congress. So was a young attorney, who now is a judge, Jerry Pacht. I think the organization of a National

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\* See appendix.



Wagner: Committee for an Effective Congress was new at the time. Irwin and I were discussing that fact, and said wouldn't it be a good idea to set up some kind of an organization here in California to bring together many single issues groups to form a coalition to elect these three on the basis of their stand on the issues.

George Brown had been a peace-oriented man for many years. He was a Quaker. He also had been a conscientious objector for part of the time. I think he did eventually go into the army.

Chall: This was World War II?

Wagner: Yes. Ed Roybal, a city councilman from Los Angeles, had been a champion of civil liberties, particularly on a local loyalty-oath ordinance. He was the one person who had opposed it. Jerry Pacht was a member of the very distinguished family of Judge Isaac Pacht, and Jerry was also a peace advocate.

Well, when we talked, it was in late '61. We talked to some of our friends, both in CDC and in the Democratic party, and some of the community people we had worked with.

No, I shouldn't even give us that much credit. We just had the idea. Then Irwin extended the idea to some other people--at UCLA particularly, and some of the Young Democrats, and some of the other academic people. I did not have any more to do with the initiation other than the original idea. I'm trying to think specifically of how this evolved. At any rate, I guess it was Irwin, who was a mature man, in his forties, who returned to UCLA as an anthropology student, and Paul Albert, and Gifford Phillips. Do you know his name?

Chall: No.

Wagner: Gifford Phillips was with the liberal wing of the Democratic party, quite a wealthy man, great integrity. He published a fine journal of opinion--Frontier, by name. Later on, I believe he was West Coast co-publisher of the Nation magazine. He's an art collector and continues to be involved in politics. He wasn't married at the time. He was also, I think, on the State Finance Committee of the Democratic party--but separate. [Laughs] He was sort of one foot in, one foot out. He had his own independent views, and a great deal of conviction, but also was part of the official Democratic party.

They called together several people, and Gifford Phillips eventually became the first chairman of the organization they called Californians for Liberal Representation.\* The purpose was to bring

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\*See appendix for the first organizing letter, May 7, 1962.





Wagner: together issues-oriented groups to work for these candidates on specific issues. These candidates being George Brown, Ed Roybal and Jerry Pacht.

Chall: So that was the first start that you made.

Wagner: Yes. This letter talks about California's independent political tradition, and support for candidates "who give more than lip service to the continuing battle...candidates who are convinced that alternatives to the deadly thermonuclear arms race must be found." The sponsoring people [are listed], some of whom you will know, and others you won't.

Paul Ziffren was the national committeeman [Democratic]. Lionel Steinberg you may know of.

Chall: He's from the valley--Fresno.

Wagner: At that time. Now he's been in Palm Springs for many, many years as a date grower, and I think the first farmer to sign with Cesar Chavez.

Chall: Is that right!

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: And A.L. Wirin was with the ACLU.

Wagner: A.L. Wirin is now emeritus, yes. Dr. Raymond J. Murphy was from UCLA. Dr. John Caughey--do you know who he is?

Chall: Yes.

Wagner: He and his wife wrote The Land of the Free and several other books.

Chall: Historian.

Wagner: He's a historian, and he's also on the board of ACLU. Arthur Carstens, as I told you, was connected with the Institute of Industrial Relations. Dr. Rudolph Carnap is also UCLA. I don't know what department. Steve Allen of course you know. Dr. Mark Doran was with SANE [Citizens Organization for a Sane World]--did you know the organization SANE? Miles Hollister was from the Friends Committee on Legislation. Cricket Levering. She was CDC.

Chall: Is that a woman?



Wagner: Oh yes, a wonderful woman. Eason Monroe--you know who he is. Senil Ostrow has been a philanthropist in the liberal progressive movement for years, a business man. I don't know Frank C. Owen. Jim Peck was and still is with the Teamsters. He's their p.r. man. The Reverend Ernest Pipes--I don't recall his church. I think he was in San Francisco. Maybe I'm wrong. I think he'd moved to San Francisco.

Rod Serling--of course you know who he is. The co-signers--these were more grass-roots people. The others were sort of the letterhead types. At that time Ruth Abraham was a CDC director. Now she is with the ACLU. Hugh Anderson also was on the board of the ACLU. Howard Berman was with the Young Democrats, as was David Cadwell. He's a lawyer from Orange County.

Miriam Colf was with CDC. Phyllis Edgecombe was with ACLU. Jean Gerard I do not know. Howard Green was with CDC. John Lake--I suppose he was with CDC. John Lozano is with the UAW [United Auto Workers]. Hugh Manes was with ACLU. I don't know Frederic Meyers. Henry Waxman was Young Democrats. Joseph Wolf was CDC.

Chall: It says Southern Division on the letterhead. Did you have a northern division then, or were you just hoping for one?

Wagner: No, we did have. Very definitely. Oh, I'm sure at that point it was just in the talking stage. At this time, CLR was just southern, but I did have the northern board too. Well, that was the beginning of, really, a very worthwhile organization.

Chall: Did you work for their elections at that time, and raise money, and set up the campaign.

Wagner: Oh, yes. Again, we were the independent wing to raise money and to get precinct workers. For example, the coalition included--I'll find something for you [looking through papers], and that will save a lot of time.

This will tell you. [Reading from brochure\*] The coalition included American Civil Liberties Union, the CDC, the California Federation of Young Democrats, CORE [Congress of Racial Equality], the Jewish Centers. That is, the board is composed of leaders and activists in these groups. It wasn't the groups themselves.

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\*Are You an Independent Liberal? See appendix.



Chall: This was not a delegate board the way the other organization was?

Wagner: No, that's right. This was not.

Chall: Do you feel more comfortable, working this way after the experience you had with the other organization, with delegate representatives, and the inability to endorse? Did this seem like a better system to you, or did you just get into it without thinking too much about it?

Wagner: Its purpose was completely different. The purpose was completely different, and the influence was much more pointed, and much more selective. Although we became a little less selective in endorsements. There are as many as eight people here in the brochure entitled "We Must" which has pictures of eight candidates.\*

But the thought was to try to involve issues groups who were not political in the partisan sense, but who were concerned with seeing that their issues somehow received recognition and action in the electoral scene.

For example, SANE was very big at the time. They interviewed these candidates on a public platform, and there was no problem. There was definite commitment. Likewise with the Mexican-American Political Association and people from the NAACP. Then there was Women's Strike For Peace on the peace issue. That was the key issue at that time, in '62. The ACLU on the civil liberties issue. When these organizations and their leadership were convinced of the conviction on the part of these candidates--even though the organization did not endorse them, because they were not political in the partisan sense--most of their membership, and their chapters, would work for the candidates.

Chall: That's how they did it.

Wagner: And we set up mobilizations to get out the vote in certain districts. We had some pretty influential sponsors, who had contacts in Washington. We brought Senator Estes Kefauver out to raise funds in the general election. Two of our candidates came through the primaries. Jerry Pacht did not. So we brought Kefauver out for the general election. We had endorsed two more candidates, Lionel Van Deerlin in San Diego who was elected, and Assemblyman John O'Connell

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\*Julian Nava, Phil Burton, Yvonne Brathwaite, Henry Waxman, Wilson Riles, Thomas Bradley, Willie Brown, Ed Roybal. 1970 campaign.



Wagner: from San Francisco, who did not make it. I can't remember if Mailliard was congressman at that time or not. It may have been an open seat, and I think it was.

I have the Estes Kefauver invitations to a garden party held at a large home in Beverly Hills. Oh, at least fifteen hundred people came to that. We had a receiving line. Then there was a very fancy dinner, the invitation for which was a telegram to about a hundred prominent people. No charge. It was at Chasen's. Have you heard of Chasen's? It's very elegant.

Chall: Yes. How could it be no charge? Who picked up that tab?

Wagner: We picked it up, but we--who was it that made the pitch there? It may have been then Assemblyman Phil Burton. [Laughs] We raised \$10,000 for the candidates. Estes Kefauver, of course, spoke. He was just lovely. One of our future fund-raising and prestigious events thereafter was to establish an Estes Kefauver Award for "individuals who served the public in the Kefauver tradition."

[End side A, tape 4]

[Begin tape 4, side B]

#### Standards for Endorsing Candidates

Chall: This organization managed to operate in the area where the Democratic party and the clubs were also operating. Were you occasionally endorsing candidates who were not endorsed by the CDC?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: So that sometimes then, in effect, there would be two candidates, at least who might be running on the Democratic party ticket, endorsed by two different groups?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: Did that create problems among the Democrats in raising money and going after the vote?

Wagner: It happened very, very seldom. I can think right now of only one occasion, but I'm sure there were more. That is when Yvonne Brathwaite was running for assembly. The CDC endorsed Herb Yates, who was running





Wagner: for the second time. We endorsed him the first time he ran. He made a very poor showing. The CLR felt that Yvonne's background, her stand on the issues, and her experience more than qualified her, from our point of view. Herb Yates was a minister, I believe, and really there was no contest, as far as we were concerned. The CDC felt that Herb had been in the club movement, and he was in the area, and he was white, incidentally. She is black. That was one occasion. There were not many.

There were occasions when we did not endorse, specifically, when CDC did endorse. I think one of those occasions was Cranston-Rafferty. At that time, Alan Cranston was not as unequivocal as he is today on the issues, but we made it clear in one of our brochures that we wanted an anti-Rafferty campaign--which was very difficult! [Laughs]

Chall: But not necessarily pro-Cranston?

Wagner: But not to endorse. CLR has really a very handsome record of being most scrupulous in our endorsements. It was not because they were nice, popular liberal men or women.

Chall: Did the candidates come to you the way they come to COPE [Committee on Political Education], to present their credentials?

Wagner: We invited the candidates, and we did so on a different yardstick. We were concerned with the movements behind the candidates. In one of the papers that I will give you there is kind of a roundup of CLR, a ten-year roundup.\* We indicate that that's really where our specific distinction was in California independent politics. We didn't select a candidate just on the basis of his stand on the issues. Many times we were told that this guy is so good on the issues. That's true, but who is supporting him in the community?

As time went on, the issues changed as far as the priority, in our scale of endorsement, was concerned. That had to do with minority representation.

Chall: In actually getting the minorities into the legislature?

Wagner: Yes. I'll give you a specific example. On our board--

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\*CLR. History, Objectives, Accomplishments, 1962 through 1973. See appendix.



Chall: Could you tell me how the board was selected? Organizations were for identification only, which means that somebody--a nominating committee of some kind--had to pick the people. They picked them so that they would represent a broad group, apparently. How was that done? You had a nominating committee?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: I was just wondering if ultimately, in a board that size, representing all kinds of views of people, you would have some problems, over whether or not a person really did represent his group. I'm thinking of the Mexican-American Political Association, which had its own internecline problems, and so, I guess, did some of the black organizations.

Wagner: Right. In 1967, I will cite a perfect example--First of all, we did have on our board activists within the Chicano community. Eduardo Perez, Del Varela, Richard Calderon, Mauricio Terrazas, Grace Montañez Davis, Trini and Manuel Aragon. There were several. Some were with MAPA [Mexican-American Political Association], some were with Democratic clubs, some from the unions. Eduardo Perez was with the United Packinghouse Workers. I think that was his union. Marvin Brody was the legislative representative from the United Auto Workers. Actually, the UAW did a great deal of work with us on many coalition issues.

There was an open seat on the L.A. Board of Education. Our Mexican-American board members and other friends in the Mexican community met, and they told us they were going to put together a convention in the community for the first time to try to terminate this business of multi-candidates knocking each other out, with the result that an Anglo would always come in. We helped organize, because we did have some very good organizers, both from the unions and the Mexican-American community--by this time, we had had a few campaigns under our belt--and from CDC and the Young Democrats.

So we helped them organize a community convention of over two hundred organizations--really the gamut, the spectrum.

Chall: Two hundred Mexican-American organizations?

Wagner: Over two hundred. It was really spectacular. From the Association of Mexican-American educators to the LULAC [League of United Latin American Citizens], which has to do with drug addicts--a great variety of concerned Chicano groups. It was just splendid!



Wagner: As a matter of fact, Bob Docter again was planning to run for this seat. Robert Docter is now on our board of education. He was going to run for the seat that we were interested in getting a Mexican-American to run for. Anyway, there were many candidates, and Dr. Julian Nava received the endorsement. In his campaign, CLR played a very important role. Maury Weiner, whom I mentioned as a former deputy mayor--he was, I believe, chairman of the campaign committee. He was on our board. He was our executive director.

Victor Ludwig was from, at that point, many groups. At that time, he was in the West Side Committee of Concern for Peace in Vietnam, but previously he was in the American Jewish Congress. He was chairman of one of the Nava committees. Richard Calderon, who has been a candidate many times, was on our board. He was chairman of the Nava finance committee.

I played a role in the precinct organization, and we gave a substantial assist to the Mexican-American community; the AFL-CIO was also very big in that. It was a marvelous campaign! Julian won, of course, overwhelmingly. That was the first time there had been such an effort in the Mexican-American community. That was in 1967.

Previously in 1965 the black community did the same thing, and CLR was the only political group--that is, primarily a white, liberal political group, with some black representation on our board and in the community--which helped put together their convention. You know, the minority communities at that time--they have learned a lot since--were not able to enlist much outside support.

That was more difficult--not the convention itself, but there were more candidates running in the black community. But the Reverend James Edward Jones, a minister, received the endorsement over many, many candidates [for the board of education]. But here again, poor Bob Docter was going to run. He really is a very decent man. He deferred to Julian Nava in the other campaign, and Bob lost the seat he eventually went for. This time he didn't defer. He was going to run, even though Jones got the endorsement. As a matter of fact, he did run.

We felt that minority representation, at this point in our history, was so important that even though Bob Docter was better qualified from an academic point of view, that at some point, the black community must name their own.





Wagner: I remember so clearly. When we had our business [Murry Wagner's business], which was in commercial collections, there were about fifteen phones. We had our board members come in, and people from other organizations--the ones that I mentioned, the ACLU, and the CDC, and the Young Democrats, and the UAW, and several others--came to phone the liberal community--the membership of SANE, and ACLU, and CDC, and the West Side liberals.

We sent a mailing out, pointing out the importance of deferring to a black, and there's general agreement that our participation helped Jones to win.\* Docter was perfectly fine about it.

Chall: Was this election within a district?

Wagner: No, the board of education is elected at large. But you see, having the organizations truly representative of the liberal Anglo, black, Chicano, some Asian, and Jewish communities, and the more active labor groups, particularly the UAW--we did influence the outcome.

That was an extraordinary contribution we made, at least to the education of the white community.

#### The Board and Administration

Chall: Well, these are two very fine successes that must have elated you. Did you have an official role in this organization? You are listed as administrative secretary on the letterhead.

Wagner: I never wanted to be. At the beginning--let's see if I have a very beginning.

Chall: Well, I have this very beginning letter.

Wagner: No, there was nobody at that time.

Chall: I don't even see your name on it.

Wagner: No. I was not part of the original group. I did some of the work, but that was in 1962. I was just finishing that business venture, and I was still in the club movement. But I just mentioned that we had

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\*Urgent Election Memo, see appendix.





Wagner: this idea, and it was implemented by others. I'd done some work for that Liberal Democrat that some of these people were involved in.

The first chairman was Gifford Phillips. There was no possibility of being paid. Paul Albert's wife, Marge, and Sheila Manes, who was very involved with the ACLU at the time, and still is--she's getting her doctorate in education--they did much of the grass roots work.

Chall: Is that Hugh Manes' wife?

Wagner: Yes. Ex-wife. [With admiration] Gosh! It's wonderful you're so knowledgeable!

Chall: Well, I'm not. I just looked at the list of names you gave me to figure out the spelling, and made an assumption.

Wagner: Marge and Paul Albert were very involved. He was on the UCLA campus. He was working on his doctorate in anthropology.

Chall: Now, you appear to be the administrative secretary in a 1969 letterhead and in 1970. Does that mean you were paid?

Wagner: No. It was all volunteer.

Chall: So everything in this organization was volunteer? How was the organization supported?

Wagner: Well, we [the Wagners] owned the office building in which we had our business office--it was a suite of offices. We gave one of those offices to the CLR. They paid a small amount of rent for awhile but then we contributed the space.

[Question and answer added during editing]

Chall: I'm still not clear how you came into that secretarial position even on a volunteer basis. And I'd also like to know what kinds of duties you assumed, or more to the point, how you came to assume those listed in your resignation letter?\*

Wagner: As I recall now, during the early years of CLR I was a member of the board. I assisted with decisions insofar as candidate endorsements were concerned; I also assisted with planning and implementing special

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\*See appendix.



Wagner: functions and seminars, mailings and the like. But I wasn't involved on a day-to-day basis since the CLR office was headquartered in Westwood, in a suite occupied by our chairman Gifford Phillips.

The board decided to move our offices closer to Los Angeles where most of us lived or worked. Murry and I offered to rent one of our own offices to CLR, at a minimum rental I assure you. I was spending several days each week at our business, doing promotional work, and assisting with the management of the building which we co-owned. Marge Albert and Sheila Manes did most of the secretarial work--women, again!--and also much of the volunteer organizing of mailings, phoning, etc. When the Alberts left for New York in '67 or '68--Marge and Paul had carried the major day-to-day responsibility as I recall--the board reorganized our structure: Maury Weiner became executive director, as a volunteer of course because he was a field deputy and political aide to then Councilman Tom Bradley.

I don't recall if my role as administrative secretary was formalized at that time; I believe it was not. However, since I was physically at the building most of the time, I assumed more and more of the responsibilities for implementing board decisions. Remember, that I took shorthand and I typed and I had a fierce commitment to follow through on board decisions. Most of our executive committee and board meetings were held at my home; I really preferred it that way so I could spend more time with our son Danny and, of course, Murry.

I really enjoyed that period. I felt productive; I believed in the work of CLR; I was able to use the many skills I had developed over the years: issuing press releases, position papers, organizing fund-raisers, drafting invitations and meeting notices, and, of course, working with some exceptionally fine people whose political judgments and integrity I had learned to trust--that's pretty rare in the business of politics. People, especially like Jack Berman, and Maury Weiner, and Perry Parks, and Grace Montañez Davis (now deputy mayor to Mayor Bradley). I knew Perry from the days of the Legislative Conference; I think he was president of the Postal Employees Union at that time; he is now an aide to Congresswoman Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. Perry and I have been through many, many struggles during the past twenty-five or so years. And Ruth Abraham, a truly dedicated woman who still works too hard at the ACLU.

After the first mayoralty campaign in 1969 when Tom Bradley was defeated, Maury Weiner took a year's sabbatical and went around the world. He certainly deserved the time off; he had made an enormous contribution to the Bradley campaign at great sacrifice to



Wagner: his health and personal life. Again, the board had to restructure CLR. I was asked and refused to assume the role of executive director. [Laughs, wryly] I said I didn't want all the responsibility, that I would be glad to work with a committee of two or three others and share the responsibility of the organization. So Arthur Carstens continued as chairman, Jack Berman became the coordinator and I, the administrative secretary; that is, I had the primary responsibility for carrying out board decisions! After awhile, I asked for and got approval to hire an office secretary. And Clara Cooper functioned most efficiently as our CLR secretary from 1969 or '70 until about 1974. It's hard to tell how many hours I worked. About six or seven during the day; then at home I either made phone calls, wrote position papers, or attended meetings.

[Question and answer added during editing]

Chall: Before we get on to some of the other activities of the CLR would you tell me more about how the board of directors was chosen, and how it functioned.

Wagner: One of the refreshing aspects of CLR was its flexibility, organizationally speaking. There was a set of by laws, a few standing committees like the nominating and political action committees, and an executive committee composed of officers and committee chairpersons. But by and large, our organization functioned almost by consensus, although votes were taken at board meetings for endorsements, action on issues, and so forth. Since most of us had many years of political experience in electoral politics we had a mutual respect for each other's judgment.

For example, our chairman Art Carstens suggested the name of Samuel Kalish for the board. Sam is a former deputy labor commissioner and a brilliant man, an economist, a teacher of labor's rights, labor codes and laws. Art thought that Sam could make a special contribution as a CLR board member, by researching facts and then writing position papers for us on labor issues. There were no questions about whether or not we would vote Sam on to our board.

Parenthetically, Sam and I have become dear friends--even more so since I left CLR; I manage to find some holes in my days so I can spend time--even a little time--with him. He's now eighty years old and still reads everything he can get his hands on, having to do with the political climate and events in the world. His one wish is that he wants desperately to see some important changes for a more equitable world before he shoves off this mortal coil. Everytime I visit with Sam I learn something of value--whether it is the current status about some country in the world, the economic picture here at home, or how a model human being cares about other human beings.





Wagner: Also remember, please, CLR was unique in that its board of directors represented activists from a broad spectrum of the political life of our community. And so, when we found during the course of many campaigns, other activists from portions of the coalition which were underrepresented, their names were submitted to the nominating committee, discussed, and recommended to the board for additional representation.

As for how the board functioned, let me give you a concrete example: When the reapportionment of our state was being considered by the legislature, our board decided to make its top priority a campaign for greater minority representation, especially for Mexican-Americans who now comprise some 16 percent of our population. Each board member brought the issue of representation to his/her own "constituency" in a variety of ways. CLR played a major role on this issue.

#### Some Selective Activities of the CLR

Chall: Did the organization do something between campaigns?

Wagner: Oh, yes. We did many things. But you see, there were campaigns in the odd years--the board of education, the city council.

Chall: That's right. You did have one every year then.

Wagner: [Laughs] Practically! I wish I had this in order, but I don't. I'm going to skip around and tell you some of the things that we did.

Chall: Is this group still in existence?

Wagner: Yes, but barely. I'll tell you about that. [Indicates paper] This is material on the board of education, rather recently.

Chall: April 6, 1971. Good. It's dated here in pencil, or pen.

Wagner: Yes, you'll put that in chronological order, I'm sure. We helped others to set up events and projects. This one, in 1968, we helped--here's a whole list of sponsors--set up a statewide conference.

Chall: What's the name of it?

Wagner: The statewide conference? Well, you'll read on this side of it--to create a new coalition.





Chall: [Reading] A statewide conference to create a new coalition for progressive social and political activists.\*

Wagner: It was sort of aborted.

Chall: And who was Mary Saylin who is listed as the chairman?

Wagner: She was with the Democratic party. She was on the reform commission, and she's now involved with the ACLU. A very energetic woman! She did a tremendous amount of work on that conference. Also a CLR board member.

Chall: I don't understand. I thought that the Californians for Liberal Representation was a creative coalition of progressive social and political activists.

Wagner: No. Actually, CLR is quite an elite group. It's a loose confederation of individual leaders from labor, ethnic, academic, women's, political and other groups in the liberal community, from many groups, but it isn't a membership organization. You can't join CLR; you can contribute and be on the mailing list and be invited to work for the election of candidates, to come to fund-raisers, to attend conferences. It is not a rank-and-file organization.

Chall: This would have been a rank-and-file organization?

Wagner: Yes. I wasn't too involved with that. I had too much of my own work to do.

Chall: Did it succeed?

Wagner: Apparently not.

Chall: I see this involved California, all over.

Wagner: Yes. It was a very broad aggregation of people. It was a good idea, but they didn't have people to follow through on it. There, too, I understand it was undermined by some disrupters. I don't know all of the story about this.

Chall: That was right after the 1968 election? I suppose there was some concern on the part of many people about what had happened in the Democratic party.

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\*A conference sponsored by the California Coalition Conference Committee, November 23, 1968 in Fresno, California.



Wagner: I suppose. It was very impressive, at least the representation was.

Chall: There are names here that one sees many, many times throughout the years.

Wagner: Yes, right. But I was kind of concerned about it from the beginning. There was a continuations committee, but they were all top people, busy in other organizations, and again, there was no real follow-through, I suppose. There was a discussion of the issues. A few of the people I see here also have the thread of disruption.

Chall: What kind of disruption?

Wagner: Well, for example, I can give you the name of this man, Abe Tapia. I have heard about Abe Tapia in the Mexican-American community, of his working for strange people--very conservative reactionary people--saying that none of the liberals are good enough, and that kind of thing. I remember him at that meeting, just raising all kinds of questions that were not constructive.

Chall: I see.

Wagner: It was a very tenuous coalition, at best. You know, California's been very strange throughout the years. Coalitions come and go.

Chall: And full of conflicts? They have difficulty coming together, even among groups who should be pulling together.

Wagner: Again, I'm not going to give it to you in order, but here, for example, we worked with the Mexican community to put together the Coalition for Fair Reapportionment in 1971, which had the blessings of all the Democrats and Republicans, and all the churches, to evolve a redistricting program for greater representation, or at least the possibility of greater representation in the Mexican-American communities.\*

As it is now, it is so gerrymandered, it really is ghettoized. It's a little better, however.

Chall: Yes, I thought it had succeeded.

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\*Representation, A Moral Issue, see appendix.



Wagner: Herman Sillas was the chairman. He is now the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Many of us who have been concerned with minority representation set about this organization, and called people from various groups to come in and help, and spread the word. I had written a paper--again, that never saw the light of day [laughs] mainly because of lack of funds--on the importance of minority representation for the majority community's self-interest.

You may have this copy.\* Anyway, that's another thing we did between campaigns.

The Chicano moratorium--we helped with that.

Chall: You spent quite a bit of effort, then, in organizing the Chicano community.

Wagner: Oh, yes. First the black community, in terms of candidates, and then in the reapportionment. Well, the reapportionment in the sixties I remember. We were involved through the end of the fifties, both in CDC and some of the remnants of the Legislative Conference, in reapportionment for the black communities. This time, for the Mexican-American communities.

One of the big things we did was on the reapportionment campaign in 1971. We appeared at all the hearings of the Committees on Election and Reapportionment in the senate and the assembly. This was a statement that I presented. [Shows paper]\*\*

Chall: That would be important, wouldn't it, for your ongoing goal of minority representation?

Wagner: Yes, there are some statistics on that.

Chall: What about the cities? Did you work to get minority representation on the city council?

Wagner: Yes. We worked--let me think now. Dave Cunningham, Bob Farrell. This was all after Bradley's election. No, we didn't do too much on an official basis. When Wilson Riles ran for the first time, we endorsed both Nava and Riles for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction [1970] in the primary.

We did not endorse Jesse Unruh for governor [1970]. We endorsed no one. All we did, was to say that--and this was true at the time-- "Press time has prevented us from interviewing Jesse Unruh, Democratic candidate for governor" (he was not available at the time). However,

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\*Draft of Proposed Position Paper on Minority Representation. November 18, 1970. See appendix.

\*\*Statement on Reapportionment. December 22, 1971.



Wagner: Sam Yorty's victory at the polls in June would be a disaster, and we call for his overwhelming defeat. Further, we intend doing something about it." Again, it was one of those negative campaigns: Don't vote for Yorty.\*

One of the things that we did, very importantly, was to issue a Progressive Tax Structure for California. Art Carstens, being an economist, was able to help develop it. He enlisted the aid of Mike [Michael] Peevey. One of our board members, Joel Siegel, who's an advertising man, did the editorial work on it. It was a popular brochure, and we had organizations take them. I think we sold them for very little, but mostly the Democratic clubs and the United Auto Workers distributed them.

Chall: Is that dated?

Wagner: [Leafs through papers] I know it is. Where is it? Yes, October 9, 1970.

Chall: That was an attempt to get the legislature to move on it?

Wagner: Yes, on tax reform.

Chall: Did people underwrite the organization, some people, so that you could have this assistance?

Wagner: We had sustainers, and we did have contributors. Then the Kefauver Award brought in several thousand dollars each year, much of which we gave to the candidates that we endorsed.

This will tell you, and you'll see what we did in-between times. We had seminars on political perspectives at the Center [for the Study of Democratic Institutions] in Santa Barbara, where we called together both elected and non-elected people concerned with issues and candidates. This is quite early. We raised funds for CORE.

This is very interesting. At the University Religious Conference, we had five seminars on the Negro Revolt and the Democratic Process. In 1963, it was still "Negro," not "black." We raised funds for the Mississippi Summer Project at a reception for Congressman Phillip Burton. Over the years we presented the Kefauver Award to Senator Wayne Morse, Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania, Senator [George] McGovern, and to William Shirer.

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\* From campaign leaflet We Must Keep Building a Coalition, 1970.





Wagner: We produced a film, "The Sound of '64," on Vietnam with Wayne Morse, and distributed that throughout the state.

Chall: Where is that film?

Wagner: Let's see. I really would like to know where that is.

Chall: Yes. You should find it, and put it in the archives.

Wagner: It was excellent.

[End of side B, tape 4]

[Begin tape 5, side A]

Chall: It was a most active and interesting organization. Did you have the feeling, most of the time, that you were accomplishing something?

Wagner: Very much so.

Chall: It was really moving?

Wagner: Yes, because we did concentrate. In '62, you know how we started, I mean the three candidates that we endorsed. In '64, Phil Burton, who was an assemblyman, came to Los Angeles. Phil knew me before I knew him. When I was with the Legislative Conference, he apparently was with the Young Democrats. He told me that he remembered me at conferences. We brought him down to L.A. and held a fund-raiser for his first campaign for Congress. I think we netted a few thousand dollars.

But the CLR did attract moneyed people from the liberal community, and still does.

#### Leadership, Ideals, and Pragmatic Political Concerns

Wagner: Now you say--and that's a very good point you make--that didn't we have some problems on the board, because of our priority for minority representation.

Yes, it was a problem. It's very interesting. By this time, some of us--where's my board list? [Searches through papers] Excuse me, tape. Hold on.



Chall: That's all right.

Wagner: Ah, here it is! You know, we had been around for a long time, and were respected very much for consistency. Jack Berman, who was and is one of the movers in CLR, is very respected by many--from Alan Cranston to, well certainly Tom Bradley.

Chall: And Jesse Unruh?

Wagner: Jesse Unruh respects Jack, differs with his approach to politics. Ruth Abraham--as I say, she's chapter director of the ACLU. Gifford Phillips, who had not been active for some time, because he was sort of disassociated from politics, I think after about the time Bob Kennedy was killed. Marvin Brody's no longer down here with the UAW. Arthur Carstens, certainly. Rick Tuttle, Maury Weiner, very heavily. A fine leader!

Eason Monroe, until he moved to San Francisco, and then died recently. Perry Parks now is an aide to Yvonne Brathwaite and is very involved, and has been for years. He was president of the Postal Employees Union, and many community organizations. Here, he's chairman of the South-Central Area Welfare Planning Council. Oh, and Esther Jackson, who's a very involved black woman in Compton, both in the Democratic party and also in the Model Cities Program.

We've worked together now for many years. Victor Ludwig, who is with the ACLU. I think I can safely say I don't think we've ever really compromised for an opportunistic reason. We've compromised for some pragmatic election reasons--if somebody didn't take an absolute stand. In a moment I'll give the best example of compromising on one hand and having a conviction on the other.

But this core of people always agreed that at this juncture in history our priority should be for minority representation. Well, I would add Herman Sillas and Richard Calderon. Very definitely Richard Calderon! I think this is the last campaign he ran [1970]. No, there was one other one. There's the Calderon case in the ACLU for city council gerrymandering. He won that. He ran for city council in 1973, I believe, in a special recall election, and lost that. I think he's finally through running.

But again, there were many, many others. Now there are some like Dave Cunningham, a black councilman, who has worked with us. I mean, some elected, and some are not elected. At any rate, on the issue of Mexican-American representation--



Chall: Are you talking about the compromise?

Wagner: I'm talking about the compromise now, on the issue of Mexican-American representation. As in '67, when there was a convention of Mexican-American organizations to endorse Nava, CLR went with that. We made a great effort and made a tremendous contribution, because he was the community's candidate. At that point, we agreed with that community. It was Nava.

In '65, it was Jim Jones. Again, a large coalition of black organizations. Not the strongest candidate, but he was the candidate of the community.

Now let me mention the compromise example I referred to: Alex Garcia, who is now a state senator (he was an assemblyman then) was really lacking in so many ways, as far as liberal issues are concerned. This was for the state senatorial seat in a special election in 1971, and Dave Roberti was also running.

We tried very hard to get--you cannot get consensus--but [opinions] of the people that we trusted and believed as liberal leaders in the Mexican community, including church people, small business people, labor people, MAPA people--Well, no, they weren't really involved too much at that time. They've sort of come alive again. But several MAPA people from the Fortieth District.

Although nobody was excited about Alex, the fact that he was an assemblyman--that gave the incumbency, of course, the edge. The Mexican-American community took pride in one of their own. They said they were going to support him for senate. We came to our board, and said this apparently is what those people who are our friends in the community want. Well, some of our Anglo peace people--well, I don't know how else to characterize them--said, "How can you take him over Roberti? We're Californians for Liberal Representation. He's not a liberal!"

We were saying that the issue is not his stand on the issues, but who does the community want for representation? The community can knock him out, if he doesn't perform as they want him to. There was quite a split on our board. A bare majority voted to support Garcia and we sent a letter, I recall, to the community about our stand.\*

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\*CLR Board of Directors Statement. See appendix.



Chall: Which community? The Mexican community?

Wagner: No, the CLR contributing, liberal community, asking for funds, and explaining our position. We were lauded in many areas, particularly the Mexican community, for being consistent. We were chided in other areas.

Chall: Did you get the money that you generally would get if you had a united backing?

Wagner: Well, I'm not sure that we were asking for a lot of money at that point. We were explaining our position, and asking support for precinct workers, some money. So in that sense, we did run into problems. But that's about the only problem we ever had.

Chall: That's pretty good!

Wagner: It was strong. It was important, and we made this the issue not only in endorsement, but we were interested in redistricting on that basis. I think we had one problem, because we were more concerned with the way the boundaries were being formed. Henry Waxman was chairman of the Elections Reapportionment Committee in the House and he was playing politics (although he's turned out to be an excellent congressman) and that created a temporary rift.

I remember I appeared before his committee at the East L.A. Community College. There was rather a cool reception, not so much by him, but by some members of the committee, because we were attacking their boundaries. But the Mexican people there felt they could count on us. I'm very comfortable with that position.

Chall: Did you find sometimes, or at all, that some of the people that you worked so hard to get in, for good reasons, were going to disappoint you? It's different getting into office, isn't it? Once you're in-- what did you do about that? Did you chide them?

Wagner: Not many times, actually.

Joseph Montoya for example, the assemblyman from La Puente. The first time he ran, we gave him quite a lot of money, and he lost very narrowly. The second time he ran, he won. He has not been very available, and I think his vote on a couple of issues--I know his votes, but I don't recall which they were--were very disappointing. It just wasn't the Montoya that we had known before he was elected. That was a glaring instance.







Wagner: In the Congress, we have very good friends. Ron Dellums; we brought Ron Dellums down here. He was known by practically no one in the white community in L.A. That was at a marvelous fund-raiser we held at a testimonial for Arthur Carstens, who retired from UCLA. We brought Dellums down, and raised some money for his candidacy to Congress.

Chall: You didn't back Alan Cranston, did you?

Wagner: Not the first time. This is in 1967. I think that's kind of interesting. [Offers something to Chall]

Chall: Crisis In California. Under Reagan?

Wagner: Yes.

Chall: The first thirty days under Reaganism, and you were already going?! [Looking through papers]

#### The Peace Movement and Other Issues

Chall: What did you do with the major elections in 1968? Did various members of your group just go out on their own and back, let's say, McCarthy, or Robert Kennedy, or Hubert Humphrey?

Wagner: It was CLR that started, I think in my living room, the peace slate for '68.

Chall: Which was?

Wagner: Which was the initiator of an independent Democratic slate--well, actually it was CLR up north and south that got together. Sy [Simon] Casady was the president of the CDC at the time. It was Sy and Edward Keating of Ramparts, from up north--mostly CLR people and CDC people. It was our CLR board, with the CDC. The peace slate of '68 was taken up by the CDC.



Chall: Yes. That was Eugene McCarthy?

Wagner: Yes, that's right. We endorsed him.

Chall: Were you disappointed in McCarthy at all?

Wagner: Yes, somewhat in his attitude towards blacks and other minorities.

Chall: But not in his stand on the issues during the campaign?

Wagner: No. I think his stand was not a disappointment. It was a general lack of sensitivity to what coalition is all about. It was an exciting campaign. We didn't assume leadership there, because CDC had the leadership. There was no question about where people were going.

As far as Kennedy is concerned, there certainly was some disagreement there, too. I know that some of my good friends were supporting Bob Kennedy. I wouldn't have had any trouble doing that in the finals. Again, it was around the peace slate; it was around the issue; it was around the coalition that CLR was involved. It was more independent than the establishment, but I'm sure that none of us had any quarrel with supporting him.

Let me, incidentally, show you one last thing on the Reagan business. [Looks through papers] This was mailed to people, asking them for contributions for a full-page ad.

Chall: [Reading] "Hardhats Against Reagan and Rafferty."

Wagner: That's not the way it came out, and I can't remember how it did. I thought I had a copy of the ad here. [Searching through papers] We did raise considerable money.

Chall: Let's see. This was from the 1970 election.

Wagner: Here it is. "We're Not Voting for Reagan." It turned out that some of the labor people objected to the word "hardhats," so this is the way it turned out. These are names of rank-and-file labor people, working people, and their unions.

Chall: That's impressive. Is this an extra one?

Wagner: No, I don't have one.



Chall: It says, "We're not voting for Reagan. We are electricians, plumbers, carpenters, steel-workers, working men, and we're proud of it! We read how we're supposed to vote for Reagan. Maybe we are supposed to, but we're not." Then there's a picture that shows seven hundred people in line for four jobs. "This is California in 1970, not 1929. If you wish to help pay for the cost of this ad, you may send contributions to treasurer Milton Elie, Workingmen Against Reagan, 1725 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, California." This was in the Los Angeles Times, November 2, 1970. I'll give it back to you now.

Now, you were endorsing candidates from northern California as well as southern California. Was there an organization in northern California? I guess I've asked you that before. I'm not quite clear.

Wagner: [Indicates paper] Here's the beginning of the board in northern California. But it did enlarge.

Chall: It enlarged?

Wagner: Oh yes. Now, Josiah Beeman--you know who he is? Joe Beeman? He's now Jerry Brown's liaison to Congress. [Looking through papers] Here's the northern California letterhead.\*

Chall: Oh, I see. This is the one. [Looking through papers] Did Paul Ziffren remain a sponsor or a supporter? He was one of the biggest names that you had, of what would be considered the "regulars."

Wagner: Right. He never was active in CLR. He felt it was a good idea to bring issues groups together to work for these congressmen. He didn't ever intend to be part of the ongoing organization. We didn't even know it was going to be an ongoing organization. It was just that effort for Brown and Roybal particularly. It was so successful that we went on in '64 for Phil Burton. Then in 1964 we brought Representative Richard Bolling out from Missouri, when the issue of reform was being widely discussed. Nothing too much came out of that, apparently.

Chall: Reform of what?

Wagner: Election reform, congressional reform. He was apparently the leading spokesman in Washington, at that time.

Chall: In 1964?

Wagner: Yes. He's still trying.

Chall: Was your organization ever linked up, in any way, with the National Committee for an Effective Congress?

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\*Urgent Campaign Memo, 1964. See appendix.



Wagner: No, with no group. Groups have wanted to link up, particularly the New Democratic Coalition. Do you know about the NDC? It has different names in different states.

Chall: I think I've seen it somewhere.

Wagner: It was primarily responsible--[laughs] I'm sure they wouldn't appreciate that today--for John Lindsay's election in New York. Proxmire--Pat Lucey--there're several people throughout the country who have identified themselves with NDC. They had wanted CLR to be part of that network nationally, but that would have been a partisan step on our part. We really didn't want it. We're really not part of any national effort. There's, you know, fraternal relations.

This is some material on that Negro Revolt and the Democratic Process series of seminars that we held at the University Religious Conference at UCLA which we talked about earlier. [Looking through papers] This was in '65. It's a nice little invite, asking people to come to Santa Monica Civic Auditorium to hear Wayne Morse.

Chall: Yes. The Facts on Vietnam. [Looking through more papers] Was that a well-attended meeting?

Wagner: Very! Standing room only! All my detail files I gave to Jack Berman, when I left the organization. But these are samples.

Chall: Well, these give us an idea of what you were doing.

#### Tom Bradley's Campaign for Mayor of Los Angeles, 1969

Wagner: Now, one of our biggest claims to fame was in 1969. [Laughs] Oh dear, dear, dear. Oh, I'm embarrassed. [Reviewing undated papers] It was the endorsement of Councilman Tom Bradley for mayor. We were the first organization to ask him to run, and it was a coincidence, because Maury Weiner was his field deputy as a councilman. He was our executive director; so it was just a happy turn of events.

Chall: You mean you actually sat around and thought up the idea of asking Bradley to run?

Wagner: He'd been thinking of it, I'm sure. I'm sure he'd been talking to Maury about it. The event, or the series of events, that really got the campaign off the ground was our bringing Mayor Hatcher [Richard]





Wagner: to Los Angeles for a weekend. We had a public meeting for him. We had a dinner. Well, the dinner was a private dinner at someone's home, at \$250 a person. It was very successful. The meeting at the International Hotel--

Chall: The meeting was free, though the dinner cost?

Wagner: It was two dollars.

Chall: I see, so that most people would come.

Wagner: That was our format for all of the things, like the Kefauver Awards. There was a private dinner, fund-raising dinner, for at least a hundred dollars, sometimes more. Then there was a public meeting. There was a series of events.

For the Hatcher weekend there was the dinner, there was the public meeting, there was a luncheon in the black community. There was a parade through the black community. There was a mariachi festival in the Mexican community, with Hatcher. It just made a lot of press, and really got the campaign off the ground. We were very proud of that.

Chall: Was this the campaign that he lost?

Wagner: That's the campaign that he lost, right.

Chall: Well, what could you have done about that? Was there anything that your organization felt that you could have done to prevent that from happening?

Wagner: Oh, no. That was the Yorty effort to end all Yorty efforts. There are so many documented stories and evidence in the black community-- the smear that Bradley was a militant, that Bradley was anti-Semitic. I personally coordinated a last-minute effort to counteract that smear in the Jewish community. And on the morning of the election, there were bumper stickers "The Panthers Love Bradley," or something like that. Just horrible things. Also when the ballot boxes were taken to some building, there are stories about some being confused and mixed and lost. That should be chronicled. I'm sure it must be, somewhere or other.

Chall: So you determined at that time that he would run again in four years. Did you support him the second time? [1973]



Wagner: Oh, surely, surely. This will tell you exactly, that we supported him a second time. [Laughs, refers to paper] But it doesn't say when!! [Laughter]

Chall: About Bradley, I think I read recently that there are some former supporters who are not too happy with Bradley. Is that true of your organization as well? Of CLR? Or let me put it just to you. I don't know what you could tell me about the organization, in that respect.

Wagner: I'm not at all unhappy with Bradley. I think that any group or individual that felt his election was a panacea for all the problems of the city was either naive or deluded. It's just not possible.

[End of side A, tape 5]

[Begin tape 5, side B]

Wagner: You have to know the man. Tom Bradley never has been an adventurer. He is a cautious, thinking man. He couldn't have gotten as far, I believe, had he not been. The thought came to me, comparing him with Richard Hatcher. Richard Hatcher is much more of an adventurer. He is more dynamic. I think he takes more risks than Tom Bradley, but then I'm not sure he could ever be the mayor of Los Angeles.

Chall: It's a different community, entirely.

Wagner: Exactly. That Tom Bradley was able to wield the kind of power, and to bring together the kind of coalition that he did, he had to be the kind of man he is, or they wouldn't have responded. One must remember that Los Angeles is really a conglomerate of persuasion. The problems of the cities, gosh knows we should know now, by looking at New York, how difficult they are.

I know some personal friends of his are very disappointed that they can't reach him, he's not as accessible. It must be very frustrating. I know at one point, it was to me on Channel 68 [KVST], but eventually, he was very receptive. Politically, he does have an open-door policy. He certainly is most trustworthy. You know, he doesn't do all of the things I would like him to do, or go far enough, but I'm not disappointed in the man, Bradley. I'm sorry he's not God! [Laughs] Really, so much for that.



## Additional Work in the Minority Communities

- Wagner: One of the important things we did was to set up an independent Conference on Community Involvement. [1970] Our minority people on the board, and one or two of us white Anglo people, set out to bring together poor and minority communities to talk, and to see how they could bring all their groups and their issues together for implementation. We brought out Jack Conway, who originally was with the United Auto Workers; then he became the president of the Center for Community Change. Then he became the executive director of Common Cause, and now he's the national something of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. The conference was very successful, and I was personally very proud of our doing this, and bringing together all of these groups.
- Chall: What has been the aftermath of something like this?
- Wagner: We really set a minimum aftermath, and that was to publish a directory of all of these organizations, and the issues they're concerned with, so that people could reach each other.
- Chall: That's very good, and you did it?
- Wagner: Oh, yes. And it was done.
- Chall: How can ideas like this become formulated for the conferences--the types of conferences that you organized?
- Wagner: Well, this for example, this CCI [Conference on Community Involvement]. I think that came about primarily through my discussions with a few of the minority board members who were working in poverty communities. There was sort of an insistence that we do something, that CLR do something, in those communities, between elections. I took this as my prime responsibility, and I was very proud of the results.
- Chall: You organized the conference, and got the speakers, and did the whole thing? I imagine you organized almost everything, at that point.
- Wagner: Well, no, not alone. We had a committee. We had a very good committee. I won't take that credit. I will take the credit of plodding it through, and seeing that it came to fruition. [Laughs] But we had some excellent people on the committee, and we met with the UAW. The UAW financed it, and put some of their field people on it. One of their persons, a Mexican-American person--let's see, there was Ralph Arriola, and I think there was another UAW person. All of our planning meetings were at their headquarters on Ninth Street. They were just very helpful.





Chall: The UAW has been quite strong in its support of liberal issues in the Los Angeles community.

Wagner: It used to be.

Chall: It isn't any more?

Wagner: I don't see that they're doing anything in the community, since there was a change in the administration. Paul Schrade was the executive director of the UAW regional office, and he's out.

Chall: Was he pushed out, or did he retire?

Wagner: No, no. He was defeated. I think after Walter Reuther died, there was a change in their priority of working in the community. Now, I'm not saying they're not doing it, I'm just not aware of the leadership there. I'm not aware, because I'm not involved.

Chall: Did you help put together the directory, too, after that?

Wagner: Well, it was done in our office, and we had volunteers come in, most of them from the groups themselves. But the groups themselves got out the mailing, and the gentleman from the community college, Manuel Ronquillo from the community services--he was very helpful to us. Very helpful! He helped us with the mailing. He was from Trade-Tech [Los Angeles Trade and Technical College], but he's in another department now.

Again, Malca, the main frustration was lack of money. Money to pay people. I would have loved to have seen this continue, because it really was a first. People are poor. They need money to work, and to organize, and to implement programs. The least we did was to publish the directory. That was it.

At the event where we brought Ron Dellums down here for Art Carstens' testimonial, it was co-sponsored by CLR and Friends of UCLA Faculty Union. [1970] It had a tremendous response from the labor unions, because of Art's involvement. This is the only copy I have. [Laughs] It's a marvelous caricature.

Chall: Is that the caricature of Carstens?

Wagner: Yes. I have his picture. He enjoyed that. Tell the tape I'm opening a drawer. [Laughter] This is a beautiful picture of Art.

Chall: Oh, yes. I see you have greetings here from Alan Sieroty.





Wagner: Alan Sieroty is a sponsor of CLR, and a very dear friend and contributor.

Here are some statements on the McGovern campaign. We did endorse McGovern.

Chall: Let's see. You endorsed McCarthy?

Wagner: Yes.\*

I had prepared annually a Report to CLR "Investors." It's sort of a summary of the year.

Chall: Each year?

Wagner: Yes. This is one of the things you may have. That was well-received, and always, of course, brought in some money. It was a recapitulation of what we had done, and it was a lot. You will see that. I'll just give you the one, because this year we were very active--in 1970.\*\*

#### Resignation from CLR

Chall: When did your involvement end with this organization?

Wagner: I'm glad you mentioned that.

Chall: What happened to you?

Wagner: Well, this is my letter of resignation, both as an administrative secretary and from the board of directors.\*\*\*

Chall: And what's that date?

Wagner: That's April 21, 1972.

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\*Roll Call of Achievements, 1968. See appendix.

\*\*Report to CLR Investors, December, 1970.

\*\*\*See appendix.



Chall: What caused that?

Wagner: It's all laid out there.

Chall: You had ten years of active work with this organization. I think it started in--what was it?--'62.

Wagner: '62, that's right.

Chall: They were a hard ten years.

Wagner: Yes, it was. Lots of things happened. Well, we'll talk about that at the end. It would be interesting to reflect on which political period, or which format of organizing, was more rewarding to me: CLC, CDC, or CLR? We do live in an abbreviated world, don't we?

Chall: It was a difficult decade, wasn't it, in American politics?

Wagner: Very, very. But the Cold War in the '50s was a very difficult period also--maybe more so. What I want to give you, and I thought I had it here--oh, here it is. After I left--it was in April '72--I was asked several months later if I would (because I was the only one who could do it) put together something that the board could present to potential board members, to candidates, and the general community to inform them about what is CLR and what it had done.

Since I had prepared most of the material and "held down the fort," so to speak, I was asked if I would do that. Screaming and tugging and whatnot, I agreed, but I said, "I don't want this to be another one of those things that I work hard on, give a lot of time and effort to, and it won't see the light of day. But that's what happened. It still hasn't.\*

I guess that's one of the things that I became a little disenchanted with.

Chall: Why didn't that and other material that you worked so hard on see the light of day? What prevented it from being used as you wanted it to be used?

Wagner: I think primarily there was just no one to follow through, and there was no money. I guess primarily no one to do it.

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\*CLR History. See appendix.



Chall: Because if somebody really wanted to do it, they probably could have raised the funds to get it out?

Wagner: I would say so. But when I left, there was a tremendous vacuum, and I knew full well that the organization would become moribund. But if it depends on one person, it's questionable as to its need. Jack is trying very hard, although he works full-time at a private business. He's international sales manager for a fabric company, and he travels to Japan and whatnot. But he works as much as he can, and he's very talented. He's a great organizer, and as I say, politically very astute and very respected.

Chall: It is a full-time job, though, for somebody.

Wagner: That's right, and there just isn't anybody. My secretary wasn't paid, at the end. But he [Berman] did have a luncheon for many people in the financial community. When I say "many," there were about twenty, which is very good. He raised several thousands of dollars to try to-- and this is before all of the candidates for president came on--clarify for the liberal community in California just how close these candidates would come to a yardstick that would be acceptable. To interview them, to ask them some hard questions, to prepare something, and then maybe on the basis of what their answers were, and their convictions and their support, to recommend someone for the primaries.

That didn't come about. I don't know what the next step is. He's ill.

Chall: Did this organization gradually become an organization which required the work of one person putting all the effort in, like you? Did this come about gradually, because either the issues changed or the goals that you had, initially, had been reached? Was it difficult to determine new goals; there was no crisis? Or did people just get tired?

Wagner: I think it was a combination of many things. I had wanted for a long time for us to take a look at our board, and to assess freshly the involvement of the people. Were they still the same? Did they have the same interests? Certainly to bring onto the board people of the new community. We did want to do that. There was no question; but here again, this meant that one person had to implement it.

Of course, when Maury went on to become deputy mayor, he couldn't spend much time, although he did come to meetings once in awhile. We did have a very good, cordial relationship with the mayor's office, which was very helpful.



Wagner: I felt unrewarded. I was tired. I wanted to pay attention to my family, after many many many many years. I just didn't see that we were doing the kind of thing that my spending that amount of time would warrant.

[Most of the following questions and answers were added during editing.]

Chall: Does your term unrewarded mean unappreciated? Did you feel, for example, the same kind of resentment toward your work and how it was viewed by others as you said you did when you left the Legislative Conference?

Wagner: Well, let me say that by unrewarded I meant that, first of all, because we were always so busy--from one campaign to another--there was never time to discuss, to assess, to take a longer view--on where we were in our political lives in general, and in CLR in particular. I'd been thinking for some time that, in all the years of organizing on legislative issues or in electoral politics, there has always been a missing ingredient. There seems to be a dichotomy in the way we political activists approach our goals.

#### Community Organization and Human Values

Chall: Could you enlarge on that thought?

Wagner: On the one hand, we work for candidates and issues in support of the "good life," like jobs, health, equality, peace, clean environment, and on and on. But very little attention is paid to the fact that because of the nature of our social structures, that is, exploitative and oppressive, most of our people in this country have developed so much distress in our lives, we have become distrustful, "turned off," fearful, cynical, and so forth. I have become convinced that until we pay attention to the human being again I don't see too much value in continuing in the maze of year-in, year-out campaigning. Not for any real lasting social change anyway.

I can remember the vicious in-fighting in the district councils and committees of the Democratic party when I was active there; even in the CDC clubs. The passions that ran so high, the name-calling, the endless telephone calls of innuendo and unsubstantiated smears--awful! I can recall so many decent, worthwhile people--candidates for public office or for Democratic party or CDC office--about whom horrible things were whispered or gossiped about.





Wagner: I remember one such name right now: George Bonnie Jones, an active union member in the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers]; he ran for Congress, I believe for an open seat. He was defeated, not because he didn't have the support necessary but because of the smear campaign by some "friends" in the Democratic party who couldn't control his campaign platform or his sense of independence. [Sigh] I'm not suggesting, Malca, that to campaign for better representatives is useless. But I am saying that something more is needed.

Chall: What, for instance?

Wagner: I've been exploring some fascinating avenues along these lines. For example, there's a new movement spearheaded by Assemblyman John Vasconcellos of San Jose called "Self-Determination: a Personal/Political Network" which involves humanistic politics. The goals are the same but there seems to be an awareness that the old methods aren't working; that another dimension needs to be added--human values.

I've been involved rather deeply in another movement called Re-Evaluation Education or RE. RE has developed a system whereby each of us learns how to use our enormous intelligence to think more clearly and creatively--to become more human by acting rationally and lovingly. To continue to accept oppression, wars, racism, pollution, etcetera, is highly irrational and certainly less than human. We learn the real meaning of power--individual power--and how to use it constructively. Since its inception in 1950 the RE Community, as we refer to it, is now functioning in several areas of the world. These are the kinds of movements that seem to me are on tomorrow's agenda for social change.

Chall: Are you saying that no important change can come about until people act more human to each other?

Wagner: Well, I'm saying that, of course we have to continue to do all the things we've been doing for lo' these many years--campaigns, lobbies, pressure groups, elections, etcetera. But at the same time we must find additional ways of changing ourselves and our personal attitudes and actions toward each other.

I'll give you two examples: In all the years I've organized or administered the myriad tasks of an organization, I've met thousands of people. Our CLR board for example was a tightly knit group in many ways. But we saw each other only at meetings. Parenthetically, most of them were held at my home and usually included dinner. I



Wagner: guess I wanted some social contact and warmth with people I have known and worked with for many years--some as long as twenty-five years, some from ten to fifteen years. During a campaign we saw a lot of each other. But after the vote or the election campaign was over--silence and absence, until the next campaign.

Chall: And the other example?

Wagner: An even greater offense, I believe, is the fact that although we were working on issues to improve the life of minority groups, working people, poor people generally, there was almost no social contact with these people. How in the world can we expect trust and confidence from a black or a Chicano--or someone who just lost his job--if we maintain no friendship, or if we express no interest in their day-to-day problems. Of course, the answer always is--or was--no time. [Sigh] But my thoughts on this would take three more tapes.

Chall: And your working with Arthur Carstens?

Wagner: As for my working relationship with Art Carstens--now there's a man who is constantly thinking and planning ahead on a variety of issues. I love one of his fantasies: he conceives of a system where each person is entitled to a year's sabbatical to be free to pursue--and be subsidized for--the arts, music, dance, or just plain "tinkering" which he or she has dreamed about but never had the time or finances to enjoy. "Who knows," says Art, "how many more fine artists or musicians we have in our country, who have not had a chance to find out where their talent lies?"

Art is both a dreamer and a pragmatic planner. Here's an example of what I mean: His programs for overhauling our tax structure, redistributing the wealth, national health insurance, and a host of other economic programs he developed in the past were regarded generally as "too far out" for practical use. Maybe. But they do deserve serious consideration. By whom? That's the question. Arthur Carstens and I enjoy a mutually respectful working relationship.

Chall: Maybe the so-called "new community" that you were interested in--maybe they will have to set up their own organization when they feel they're ready, just as you did when you were ready.

Wagner: Yes, and it may take new forms. It always does. I think that's exciting, that possibility.



Wagner: But I did agree to do the CLR recapitulation, and I will give you the covering letter to them, and the first rough draft. I think it will tell you everything that you have to know. Hopefully, it should see the light of day.

Chall: That will go into the appendix. [Laughs]

Wagner: It's a happy set of experiences.

Chall: Now, I think you've done very well with this interview. We haven't been able to take care of your latest project, which is community television--KVST-TV.

[End side B, tape 5]



## V INTO THE THIRD DECADE: VIEWER SPONSORED TELEVISION FOUNDATION

[The following material was added during editing.]

Wagner: Well, it's more than just community TV. It seemed to me that the concept of KVST was a perfect extension to what I had been doing for almost thirty years, and adapted to the present era of mass communication, through television. The idea of granting public access--free--to disadvantaged groups; to have a potential viewing audience of ten million, if you please!; to observe local community meetings on a variety of issues; to involve various ethnic groups, women, and many others, in planning their own programs on health, housing, politics, civil liberties, whatever--all of this was tremendously exciting. In a little more than a year we were working with over two hundred community organizations, had the enthusiastic support of Mayor Bradley as well as our two senators, Cranston and Tunney.

Through my many years in the political arena I was able to use all of my organizational skills, as well as political and community contacts, to get government grants--through the city council, county board of supervisors, and HEW. KVST was the first experiment nationally in establishing a true station for the people. And the experiment was working! With a bare-boned budget we produced more original programming than any other public broadcasting station: 20 percent was produced by Mexican-Americans in English and Spanish; at least 15 percent by and for the black community; a regular weekly women's program produced and directed by women, with mostly women in all the technical phases; an investigative journalism program highlighting important issues of the day, and other innovative programming.

Our latest request was approved by HEW for very sophisticated color mobile equipment. This meant we were going to be able to be truly mobile, to cover significant local events in the field and become the people's eyes and ears, so to speak. One segment of our community which concerned us was the elderly and handicapped--the shut-ins. Programs with county agencies were in the planning stage, to bring





Wagner: up-to-the minute information to these shut-ins on their rights, social security, and other benefits, where to get hot meals, etc. And they could also call in to have their questions answered by experts.

Of course the financial hardships on the staff were monumental, but there was a dedication on their part that was truly poignant. We all knew that if we could hang on for another year most of our critical financial problems would be resolved. Our viewer sponsors were growing monthly; our on-air fund appeals were successful, and our government grants were practically assured for the future.

### The Failure of a Successful Project

Wagner: There was only one problem fundamentally, and we knew that until that was resolved our infant station was in jeopardy.

I must tell you a word or two about a magnificent woman I came to love and respect. You may have heard of, or seen her in films-- Leslie Parrish. She was also a producer and director. I met Leslie only briefly prior to KVST. I think she was handling the speakers' bureau for Congressman George Brown's campaign for U.S. Senate in 1972. That's when Tunney first ran and defeated George in the primaries. She was a McGovern delegate to the Democratic national convention in 1972. She had been deeply involved in the peace movement. She also had worked tirelessly to raise funds for the farmworkers and was able to get other stars to appear at fund-raising events. If Leslie has a fault, it's that she throws herself completely into a cause she's dedicated to and then becomes ill for a time.

At any rate, Leslie spent some six years--volunteering of course-- helping to make KVST a reality. She was elected president of VSTF [Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation] in January 1975--that's the licensee for KVST-TV. She also joined the staff as director of development and was responsible for coordinating all fund-raising for the station. She virtually abandoned her acting career for the cause of KVST, which was a great sacrifice, financially and health-wise. Incidentally, Leslie was the first woman to become president of a major television station nationally. We developed a mutually respectful friendship and worked very closely on a number of projects.



Wagner: At any rate, the problem I referred to was never resolved. That is, the necessity to neutralize--at the very least--the influence of a few disrupters on the board. Leslie was constantly attacked as a racist--which would be laughable if it weren't so tragic. Many of us were also attacked, my husband included; he was also on the board, a fund-raiser, a contributor, who donated his professional services to hold off our many creditors. Murry has another profession which was useful to the station: he contributed his services as a narrator, delivering public service announcements (psa's). (Murry was a victim of the Hollywood blacklist during the McCarthy era--a network radio announcer and a fine actor.)

Anyway, the most vociferous board member, Raul Ruiz, maligned our chief engineer unmercifully, to the point that he said he refused to take these attacks any longer. He walked out and practically the entire staff joined him on Christmas Eve, 1975. Raul and his friends took over the board (by one vote, having intimidated a number of other board members), and the station never got back on the air again.

And so, our noble experiment failed.\* The failure of KVST was due--for the most part--to a fact I mentioned before: the distrust and cynicism of a few board members who, having achieved power for the first time, acted in a highly irrational and destructive manner. The hate that was spewed by a few was fiercesome! Incidentally, I have known at least two of these hate-mongers for many years--one a Chicano, I just mentioned, and the other a black woman, and their role is always the same: to cast doubts and hurl the specious cry of "racism"; to throw each meeting into chaos so that business, particularly the crucial financial business of the station, became paralyzed. Consequently, the few large contributors became outraged at the constant harrassment and intimidation and left the board. Through the years I have seen their actions, these hate-mongers, and I am convinced that they use these disruptive tactics to destroy worthwhile projects. There is abundant, provable evidence.

What hurt as much, or more if possible, was the disgusting role of a few white liberal--friends--hah! whose guilt about being labelled "racist" led to equally irrational actions. I suggested they check with some distinguished and involved people in the Mexican-American community who could confirm my accusations: people like Dr. Julian Nava and about a dozen or more equally knowledgeable and respectable people in that community.

---

\*See appendix for memoranda and correspondence related to the station and this issue.



Wagner: You must know, Malca, having gone back over the years with me briefly, that I have enjoyed the trust and friendship of many, many community leaders who are Mexican-Americans. But my warnings to my liberal white friends fell on deaf ears. I was white, you see, and the people I was critical of were brown and black; and so they, my "friends," only two or three, voted with them. Really, there's a material here for a profound socio-political study.

Chall: You still sound deeply hurt.

Wagner: Ah yes. As a consequence of this experience my thoughts have been reinforced on the need to "humanize" as well as organize for social change. I also have learned that, after thirty years of organizing and working for "liberty and justice for all," I still have a long way to go toward accepting today's reality. I still suffer a deep pain in the face of injustice, of distrust, and of raw hate. I understand where they're coming from, but somehow it doesn't help.

But in a sense, I'm pleased that my sensitivity is still very much a part of me. I was afraid for awhile that I would become mechanistic, thinking only of the right strategy and tactics all the time, and I might lose my sense of humanness. I'm confident, Malca, that there are solutions to the mystery of life--less mysterious all the time. I think we can find these solutions--we will find them--if we continue to organize, develop a greater awareness of our people power, and learn to trust and respect each other's humanness.

Transcriber: Leslie Goodman-Malamuth  
Final Typist: Keiko Sugimoto



APPENDIX





## APPENDIX - TABLE OF CONTENTS

Historical Background of the Independent Coalition Leading Up to the California Legislative Conference by James Burford	110
Call to Statewide Legislative Conference, 1952	112
Review of California Legislative Conference, 1956	113
"They've Gone About as Fur as They Can Go" (song)	115
Summary of Proposed Legislation introduced into the 1953 California State Legislature, 1953 (pages 1 and 2 of 14)	117
Public Statement of Eleanor Raymond before State Committee on Un-American Activities, 1952	119
Weekly Digest of Bills Scheduled for Committee Hearing, 1955	121
ON THE RECORD, Final Roundup of Legislation Affecting the Welfare of the People, 1955 (cover page and pages 1 and 2 of 6)	122
California Legislative ALMANAC, 1954, Table of Contents	125
"Speaking for the People," 1948 (pages 1 and 22 of 32)	126
Statement in Opposition to Application for Rate Increase by Southern California Gas Company, 1951	128
"Voters Watch Out" flyer (portions)	130
"Whimsical Warrior of State Politics" by Phil Kerby	131
Committee of 1000	132
Californians for Liberal Representation, organizing letter, May 7, 1962	133
Are You an Independent Liberal? (flyer)	135
Urgent Election Memo, 1965	136



Resignation Letter - April, 1972	138
Representation: a Moral Issue, May, 1971	141
Draft of Proposed Position on Minority Representation, November, 1970 (page 3 of 7)	142
CLR Board of Directors Statement, June, 1971	143
Urgent Campaign Memo, 1964	145
Roll Call of Achievements, 1968	146
History, Objectives, Accomplishments (CLR) 1962 through 1973 (cover letter, pages 1,2 and 5 of 10)	147
KVST-TV: Memoranda and Correspondence 1975-1976	151



### Historical Background of the Independent Coalitions Leading up to the CLR

The candidacy of Upton Sinclair on the End Poverty in California (EPIC) ticket in 1934 which won the Democratic nomination for governor and lieutenant governor narrowly missed final victory. It did bring a tide of average citizens, previously non-political people into the California political arena. Along with Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" there was created a new political era.

California became the scene in which the Townsend Plan and a host of other movements springing from the needs of people drowning in the depression of the thirties grew in great proliferation. New life came to the moribund American Federation of Labor and the CIO was soon to come on the scene to organize auto, rubber, steel and a myriad of smaller industries like shoe, men's clothing, dock and warehouse workers.

Even with the injection of a sizeable contingent of liberal Democrats the state legislature remained substantially a citadel controlled by the special interests through their lobbyists such as "king maker" Artie Samish.

It was Samish along with a small group of lobbyists who picked the candidates on both party tickets and then saw to it that money and support from the banking, utilities, land, insurance, trucking interests gave the anointed candidates a most substantial advantage.

There was a tendency of the various pension, labor and unemployed groups to make their own individual alliances with candidates based on commitments to their narrow interests.

The more left of the political activists recognized the need for unity in the primaries if they were to have a chance to elect candidates that represented a real alternative. Coordinating councils which first required of prospective candidates seeking endorsement to pledge that if they were not endorsed, they would then drop out of the race, functioned in many districts.

Unity became a keystone of left-progressive political strategy. The 1938 election of Culbert L. Olson and Ellis Patterson as Governor and Lt. Governor was a new high water mark in progressive Democratic politics in California. But having won substantial victories in the legislature, in the following years there remained a great problem in obtaining progressive legislation.

The post war period developed new social and economic problems to add to the unsolved problems of the past. In 1946 the California Legislative Conference came into being which brought together many unlikely allies, ranging from the dairy farmers of a San Joaquin Valley milk cooperative, to small business men, even conservative building trades unions and a great variety of community organizations; some broadly political and some organized around a single issue.

It was on this scene that Eleanor Raymond, now Wagner, entered as the individual whose responsibility it was to bring together these scattered forces, convince them to sublimate their differences and act in the legislative areas in which common agreement could be secured.



One of the most interesting aspects of Eleanor Wagner, as I look back to those years, is that she represented the phenomena of leadership which rose from the struggles of people to solve the very pressing problems which they faced. Here was a highly intelligent young woman, who but a few years before, knew little or nothing about politics or economics but who in the process of building this legislative coalition developed an understanding of the political forces at work, learned the techniques for harnessing these forces, and developed a clearly defined set of objectives as to where they needed to go in order to win solutions or partial solutions for people without pensions, the hungry without adequate relief and medical care, and a growing people's movement with far too few rights.

Eleanor Wagner is an example of what the people can produce when they are in motion for a better world. She worked as a woman with a sense of her own worth long before "women's liberation" as a distinct movement developed. Remaining a very feminine person she worked with men as nearly as possible for the time as an equal.

The commitment to a peaceful world, to social and economic progress which Eleanor Wagner made in the thirties has been a continuing one. She has been a vital influence on a wide circle of people with whom she has worked down through the decades in many areas from political action to the establishment of a people's TV station.

Those of us who were in the mainstream of political, trade union, and social action during the thirties and forties formed bonds of friendship based on our participation in common struggles that have seldom been equaled in the later periods of our lives. Eleanor Wagner has not only enriched the world in which she has lived and worked, her friendship enriched my own life as it has so many others.

James Burford

3 May, 1977  
Los Angeles, California





# 1952 IS A FATEFUL YEAR

**A**LL CALIFORNIANS are disturbed and concerned with the grave problems confronting our state and our nation.

**THE ARMAMENT PROGRAM** is resulting in run-away inflation, staggering taxes, sharp curtailments in social services. It threatens a precipitous decline in the standard of living of the American people.

**THE UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING** proposal, although temporarily halted due to opposition by every important labor, educational, farm, and religious organization in the country, faces renewed attempts for passage. UMT would "control the future of all U. S. boys during eight of the most critical and formative years of their lives," said the Social Education and Action Division, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

**THE BILL OF RIGHTS**, cornerstone of our democracy, is the object of the most dangerous and sweeping attack in history. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, sensitive to the atmosphere of hysteria, warned, "We are drifting in the direction of repression, drifting dangerously fast. It means that the philosophy of strength through free speech is being forsaken for the philosophy of fear and repression."

**THE CIVIL RIGHTS** of Negro, Mexican-American and other minority people are in dire jeopardy—increasing attacks and acts of violence are shocking citizens everywhere.

**CORRUPTION** in high places has become a national scandal. It is corroding all levels of government.

We, together with all civic-minded Californians, anxious for the welfare of our people, look on this state of the Union with righteous indignation. We know that responsible citizens from all walks of life will want to consider these and other critical questions in this important election year.

We, therefore, issue this Call to our fellow Californians to the 1952 Statewide Legislative Conference, to discuss common and urgent issues. Decisions by workers, farmers, professionals, businessmen, pensioners, youth, clergymen, consumers, housewives and others, will help restore our standard of living, extend our civil liberties, and protect our future in a world of peace and security.

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## REVIEW OF CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Report to Advisory Board, September 1956.

At this 10-year juncture in the rich and full life of CLC, it is well and indeed necessary to review briefly its history and to evaluate its role today.

CLC was founded in 1946 by the then Attorney General Robert W. Kenny and Bartley Crum, noted attorney. At the call of these distinguished leaders, 600 organizational representatives came to Sacramento to a Statewide Legislative Conference. Practically every major organization was represented: AFofL unions and councils, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods, Machinists, NAACP, Jewish organizations, Townsendites, veterans, parents, teachers, young people, farmers and consumers. Its purpose: to democratically discuss and develop a post-war, peacetime legislative program for the people of California.

At that time, child care funds were in danger of being terminated, returning veterans found little or no housing, farmers needed a program for cheaper water and power, pensioners were getting \$45 a month and the unemployed were receiving \$20 a week, the need for a fair employment practices act was as pressing then as it is today.

The Conference met with overwhelming success - particularly for two reasons: the need was urgent and the bringing together of so many organizations which previously had not the strength of collective discussion and proposals for action. Because of the enthusiasm engendered, a Second Statewide Legislative Conference was held the following year and a permanent Continuations Committee was set up: one for Northern California and one for Southern California. Offices and staff were obtained.

CLC established one precedent after another: It sent delegations to candidates; it conducted lobbies in Sacramento, bringing as many as 600 people to visit their legislators; it sent spokesmen to public hearings set by state and federal committees on one or another issue - even on the question of protection for bees - on Central Valley, the transit system, and other issues not too popularly understood; it sent spokesmen to platform committees of all political parties to incorporate the program adopted. It pioneered the trail in issuing voting records of public officials, thereby holding up to scrutiny their performances as public servants. It called regular legislative conferences whereby the program was revised and brought up to date, based on new legislative needs of the people of California.

Always the emphasis has been to make the average voter, through his or her organization, more legislative conscious and to emphasize the conviction that through rank and file participation, through numbers of strength, progress has been made and will continue to be made.

(continued)





As the political climate changed, and the tactic of divide, split and weaken was substituted for united and strong - organizations began to disassociate from each other in self-defense or they were split internally so badly that their membership and treasuries were sadly weakened, if not completely destroyed.

But other very positive changes were taking place: organizations had learned the importance of legislative education, of voting records, of lobbies, of appearing at hearings, of taking independent political and social action. And the Legislative Conference led the way to a very large extent. So that on the scene in California today, we see a more active AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education, a Machinists Non-Partisan League; we see the NAACP keeping a weathered eye on the Congress and the State Legislature; the pension movement which, here in California is mainly represented by George's McLain's organization (California Institute of Social Welfare), issues its own pamphlet on social welfare voting records; the Friends Committee on Legislation servicing its members and groups most ably; we also see smaller independent organizations taking their place in educating their members on legislative and political issues.

After a decade of service, it certainly is apparent that the founders of CLC, the organizations which have been working with CLC, and officers and volunteer staff, may well feel proud of the contributions to legislative progress initiated through the Conference.

As we view the scene today, it appears that CLC should concern itself with three problems: 1) are the needs still the same and to what extent; and if the needs are still existent and it is felt CLC should continue on some basis, then 2) the questions of finances and 3) personnel must be resolved.

It is therefore proposed that since this is the initial report for discussion, that it be given serious thought and consideration, and that further discussion and recommendations be brought to the next Advisory Board meeting after the first of the year.

Report presented by  
Eleanor Raymond Wagner



Melody: "Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City" -  
from the play "Oklahoma!"

THEY'VE GONE ABOUT AS FUR AS THEY CAN GO

VERSE:

I got to Sacramento on a Friday  
By Saturday I learned a thing or two  
I found that Burns and Tenney have an idee  
Of what they're gonna try to do to you  
I found that all the people licensed by the state  
Are gonna have to sign a sort of pledge  
And when they have signed it  
They'll find out  
They have put their throats against the razor's edge  
What next? Yea, what! What next?  
Gather you 'round!

1st CHORUS:

Everything's all fouled up in Sacramento  
They've gone about as fur as they can go  
A doctor cannot practice  
Until he takes an oath  
And swears that he has always been a schmoe  
Health is breaking down in Sacramento  
The cesspool is about to overflow  
The oaths that doctors used to take  
Came from Hippocrates  
But now they've got a new one  
Designed by S. O. B.'s  
Which hasn't got a thing to do with curing your disease  
They've gone about as fur as they can go  
We're pushed about as fur as we will go!

2nd CHORUS:

Everything's all fouled up in Sacramento  
They've gone about as fur as they can go  
The boys who studied Blackstone  
Can never try a case  
If they ever tried to change the status quo  
To be admitted to the bar at Sacramento  
You'll have to be an awful So and So  
They aim to pass some tricky laws  
To make you sign a pledge  
That you have never been what Mr. Tenney may allege  
With Burns and Tenney acting as your jury and your judge  
They've gone about as fur as they can go  
We're pushed about as fur as we will go!

ic by Dr. Frederick Reynolds, Ophthalmologist  
1951 or '52





## 3rd CHORUS:

Everything's all fouled up in Sacramento  
 They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 If the guys who drill your malars  
 Should fail to take the oath  
 Your cavities will grow and grow and grow  
 Pink tooth-brush ain't allowed in Sacramento  
 Where guys with halitosis run the show  
 Your canines and bicuspid  
 Will slowly rot away  
 If Tenney makes the rules by which  
 Your dentist has to play  
 So while we still can chew our food let's laugh and let's be gay  
 They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 We're pushed about as fur as we will go!

## 4th CHORUS:

Everything's all fouled up in Sacramento  
 They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 Utter and McKinley  
 And even Forest Lawn  
 Will have to take the oath or they must go  
 They're embalming Civil Rights in Sacramento  
 Mr Burns is in the business as you know  
 A fellow cannot shuffle off this mortal coil  
 And decently be buried underneath the soil  
 Unless his undertaker can swear that he is loyal  
 They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 We're pushed about as fur as we will go!

## 5th CHORUS:

Everything's all fouled up in Sacramento  
 They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 Gorgeous George and Mr Moto  
 Must pledge conformity  
 Before another wrestler they can throw  
 If they get a strangle hold in Sacramento  
 They'll hang on and never let us go  
 A wrestler who is sensitive, artistic, and refined  
 Will get no chance to pin a hold upon the other kind  
 A wrestler's right to speak his mind must not be undermined  
 Oh - They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 We're pushed about as fur as we will go!

## FINAL CHORUS:

Everything's all fouled up in Sacramento  
 They've gone about as fur as they can go  
 And you who are not covered  
 By the current bills  
 Should try your disappointment not to show  
 For, they're making plans for you in Sacramento  
 To multiply your misery and woe  
 If you do not have a license, it doesn't mean a thing  
 You may have to buy a license when you buy a wedding ring  
 And then that song "Oh Promise Me" you'll never get to sing  
 Oh - they've gone about as fur as they can go  
 Let them hear our voices shout a ringing NO!



The digest of measures appearing on the following pages by no means includes all of the 5405 bills introduced into the present session of the California State Legislature. Because of the method of introduction, it is becoming increasingly difficult for civic-minded persons and organizations to study in advance the content of bills which affect the social, economic and political interests of the major groups in our state. In a record brief time of only 11 days, the unprecedented number of 5405 measures were introduced on virtually every subject conceivable.

To add to the confusion, the odious custom of throwing into the hopper so-called "spot bills" has been practiced in the current session more than ever before. "Spot bills" refer to those which are drafted in skeleton form to (1) reserve space by the legislator since all bills must be introduced in the January session; and (2) conceal the real intent of the bill. Such bills usually are added to, amended and changed so that there is little similarity between the bill in final form and its original presentation.

However difficult the task has been made for the voters to know what is planned by their lawmakers, this much we know. There is every indication that attempts will be made to cut back welfare programs and power projects, raise taxes, cripple labor's rights, weaken teacher tenure, encourage discrimination and generally to impose greater restrictions.

The State Chamber of Commerce has served notice that welfare programs, unemployment and disability insurance, and other benefits must be "trimmed" to the bone.

It is up to us, the people of California, through our organizations and in our communities, to express to our legislators our needs, desires, and protests. This is our democratic right and responsibility.

For these good reasons -- to educate and suggest legislative action -- the California Legislative Conference will keep a vigilant eye throughout the session in Sacramento. It will continue to assist, as it has in the past, all democratic-minded organizations and individuals throughout our state to advance their legislative programs.

---

Key to following pages:

AB - Assembly Bill  
 SB - Senate Bill  
 ACA - Assembly Constitutional Amendment  
 SCA - Senate " "  
 ACR - Assembly Concurrent Resolution  
 SCR - Senate " "  
 AJR - Assembly Joint Resolution  
 SJR - Senate " "

SD - Senatorial District  
 AD - Assembly District

Under "committee referred", committee name is abbreviated. On sheet titled "STANDING COMMITTEES" the full committee name, chairman and committee members will be found.

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The determination of "Support" and "Oppose" is made on the basis of the Conference program, the purpose of which is to advance the social, political and economic well being of the people in our state.



LABOR

<u>Bill No. and Author</u>	<u>Summary</u>	<u>Committee Referred</u>
<u>UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE - (SUPPORT)</u>		
<u>AB-378</u> (Collins, 24 AD)	Extends coverage to employees of non-profit organizations.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>AB-262</u> (Dunn, 13 AD)	Extends coverage to agricultural labor.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>AB-259</u> (Dunn, 13 AD)	Increase in weekly unemployment insurance benefit from \$25 to \$40 maximum.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>SB-613</u> (Miller, 17 SD)		Soc. Wel.
<u>AB-1677</u> (Brown, 30 AD)	Additional \$5 per week for each dependent - maximum of 3 dependents	Fin. & Ins.
<u>SB-612</u> (Miller, 17 SD)		Soc. Wel.
<u>AB 263</u> (Dunn, 13 AD)	Repeals 7-day waiting period.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>DISABILITY INSURANCE - (SUPPORT)</u>		
<u>AB-133</u> (Beck, 41 AD)	Increases maximum weekly payment from \$30 to \$40.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>SB-512</u> (Harold T. Johnson, 7 SD)		Soc. Wel.
<u>AB-114</u> (Beck, 41 AD)	Eliminates 7-day waiting period.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>AB-1477</u> (Donahoe, 38 AD)	Permits payment during pregnancy.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>AB-1781</u> (Donahoe, 38 AD)	Provides 10 week disability pay for pregnancy.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION - (SUPPORT)</u>		
<u>AB-230</u> (Maloney, 20 AD)	Increases temporary disability payments to \$40 per week and permanent disability from \$30 to \$35.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>SB-448</u> (Regan, 5 SD)		Labor
<u>AB-745</u> (Shaw, 72 AD)	Additional \$5 per week to injured workers with dependents.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>SB-459</u> (Regan, 5 SD)		
<u>AB-374</u> (Collins, 24 AD)	Extends mandatory w.c. coverage to agricultural labor.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>AB-275</u> (Hahn, 66 AD)	Increases maximum death benefit from \$8,750 to \$12,800.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>U.I. and D.I. - (OPPOSE)</u>		
<u>(AB-1757</u> (all by Levering <u>(AB-1825</u> 60 AD)	Series of bills to restrict and curtail eligibility for unemployment and disability insurance.	Fin. & Ins.
<u>(AB-2670-2676</u> , inclusive		
<u>(AB-2679-2684</u> , inclusive		





TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1952

PUBLIC STATEMENT OF ELEANOR RAYMOND

(ISSUED AS A PRESS RELEASE ONLY)

One purpose and only one purpose has motivated the Senate Committee on Un-American Activities to call me before it this morning in connection with the public housing probe. That purpose is a last frenzied attempt to discredit the low-cost housing program through yet another unconstitutional and illegal procedure.

This committee now has as its chairman Senator Hugh Burns, funeral embalmer from Fresno. Its former chairman is that great 200 percent American, Senator Jack Tenney, official standard bearer and vice-presidential candidate of the Christian Nationalist Party whose program stands for race baiting and "White Christians Only." Senator Burns, while hunting witches in Los Angeles, is staying at the new and very lush Statler Hotel - at the taxpayers' expense. Could the families who need low-cost housing so desperately afford such quarters - even for a day?

Because I, in my official capacity as executive secretary of the California Legislative Conference, had the "audacity" to write two letters on the housing issue -- one to Executive Director Howard Holtzendorff of the City Housing Authority which urged reinstatement of Executive Assistant Frank Wilkinson; the other to the Los Angeles City Council which urged that Councilman Ed Davenport publicly apologize to Councilman Edward Roybal for the former's scurrilous remarks against the latter -- I now am to be "brought to task" as a not-so-gentle reminder to others, to hold their tongues and their pens and to refrain from any democratic protest against indecent words or acts of public officials.

But far from accomplishing the desired results, this committee shall receive no aid from me.

Were I to give any moment or word of comfort to this obviously un-American committee, I would indeed be disloyal to the program and principles of the California Legislative Conference with which I am deeply proud to be associated. For the past six years, the Conference has brought education and enlightenment to the people of California on legislative matters and has attempted to influence the passage of social and economic laws which would afford greater security and equality to our citizens. With the composition of this committee's members, both past and present, the Conference program of social progress has been, to say the least, rather unpopular. And for good reason.

(more)





During the 1951 regular session of the State Legislature, with but one exception every member of this committee voted for a bill to further restrict and deny unemployment and disability insurance benefits to working people (AB 2502). The Legislative Conference worked tirelessly to defeat this measure which was finally vetoed by the Governor.

Again during the last session, every member of this committee with but one exception voted against a bill to prohibit racial discrimination in apprenticeship training (AB 546). Again the Conference fought for its passage. This was the only civil rights measure approved by the Legislature.

And a final example of the anti-labor character of this committee (although we can cite chapter and verse on dozens of other measures) is the fact that during the 1949 session, with but one exception every member of this committee voted for the so-called "hot cargo" bill which would have restricted labor's right to organize, bargain collectively and seek public support (SB 1066). The Conference is proud of its role in assisting to defeat this measure which was opposed by all of organized labor.

I might add that at no time does the "one exception" refer to the chairman of this committee.

Is it any wonder, then, that I, as a representative of a fighting organization for the rights of labor, minorities, pensioners, small farmers, teachers, parents and civic groups throughout our state, should be summoned before a committee whose very purpose is to silence and intimidate spokesmen for such lofty ideals?

On behalf of the Legislative Conference I want to pledge here and now that not only will we refuse to be intimidated and refuse to give any comfort to this committee's nefarious scheme to discredit the low-cost housing program, but we will accelerate our efforts in bringing legislative truth to the organizations and individuals of California, through publication of voting records and other material, and through continuing to conduct campaigns for low-cost housing, for low-cost transportation, for equality, dignity and economic security for all our people.



## BILLS SCHEDULED FOR COMMITTEE HEARING

Bulletin #10

May 20, 1955

<u>DATE</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>DIGEST</u>	<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>ROOM</u>
Friday May 20	SB 1392 (Kraft, 40 SD)	Continues child care program for 2 years.	Assembly Ed.	3 P.M.	2170
Friday May 20	AB 509 (Maloney, 20 AD)	See p. 3 SUMMARY Workmen's compensation, in- crease maximum death benefit.	Assembly W. & M.	3 P.M.	4202
Friday May 20	SB 1756 (Richards, 38 SD)	See p. 5 SUMMARY Spot bill relating to tax exemption.	Senate Rev. & Tax.	9 A.M.	3191
Monday May 23	AB 941 (Elliott, 40 AD)	Provides for pensions for non-citizens residing in U.S. for 25 years.	Assembly W. & M.	3 P.M.	4202
Tuesday May 24	AB 1390 (Coolidge, 27 AD)	See p. 9 SUMMARY Cigarette tax increase.	Assembly Rev. & Tax.	8 P.M.	4202
Tuesday May 24	AB 2865 (Munnell 51 AD)	Returns social welfare pro- gram for aged persons to state administration.	Assembly Soc. Wel.	3 P.M.	2170
Wednesday May 25	SB 1967 (Dilworth, 37 SD)	See p. 12 SUMMARY Dismissal of teachers.	Senate Jud.	9:30 A.M.	3191
Wednesday May 25	SB 1765 (Richards, 38 SD)	See p. 4 SUMMARY Creates state FEPC.	Senate Labor	8 P.M.	3191
Wednesday May 25	AB 2300 (Havkins, 62 AD)	Policy statement on fair employment practices, without a commission.	Senate Labor	8 P.M.	3191
Thursday May 25	AB 203 (Elliott, 40 AD)	Permits teachers to engage in political activity.	Senate L. Gov.	8 P.M.	4202
Friday May 27	SB 581-5 (Breed, 16 SD)	See p. 9 SUMMARY Series of bills incorporating Gov. Knight's tax proposals.	Senate Rev. & Tax.	9 A.M.	3191



# ON THE RECORD

July 1955

SACRAMENTO --- 1955 REGULAR SESSION

FINAL ROUNDUP

of

LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE

SUMMARY.....	p. 1
LABOR.....	p. 2
F.E.P.C. ....	p. 2
CIVIL LIBERTIES.....	p. 3
EDUCATION.....	p. 4
WELFARE.....	p. 4
TAXES.....	p. 5
ELECTIONS.....	p. 5
MISCELLANEOUS.....	p. 5

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE - 408 SO. SPRING ST. - SUITE 315 - LOS ANGELES 15

Robert W. Kenny, Chairman

Eleanor R. Wagner, Executive Secretary



## S U M M A R Y

This is the final roundup on what happened to the bills of most interest to the people of California in the 1955 Session of the State Legislature. This summary should be read in connection with our February Summary of Bills before the Legislature.

The most significant developments of this session were:

- 1- Almost every bill for further repression of civil liberties went down to defeat. This was done by the greatest mobilization of the people themselves in the history of the California legislature. Delegations, letters, wires, phone calls to legislators were the best demonstration of the democratic process at work. Particularly noteworthy were the defeats of the Burns-Chapel licensure bills. Unfortunately, no bills to repeal existing repressive legislation were passed.
- 2- Intensified activity by all labor, minority and civic organizations brought FEPC closer than ever before to becoming law.
- 3- Labor was able to defeat most of the Burkett proposals to restrict unemployment insurance benefits and was able to gain a \$3 weekly increase in benefits for higher-paid workers, but at the expense of cutting benefits for lower-paid workers.
- 4- The Governor's program for increased consumer taxes was defeated.
- 5- In the field of social welfare, aid to the aged was raised \$5 a month, child care centers were approved for another two years instead of a permanent program, while an improved mental health program went down to defeat.
- 6- No action was taken on vital resource problems for California such as water.





## L A B O R

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE  
AB 1370 (Doyle, Donald)

Increases maximum benefits from \$30 a week to \$33 for top wage brackets; requires minimum earnings of \$600 in base period instead of previous \$300 (thus making 30,000 lower-paid workers ineligible); increases waiting period from 5 weeks to 10 for "refusal" of suitable employment or for making false statements. This compromise replaced the Levering Bills that incorporated Director of Employment Burkett's 77 proposals to restrict unemployment benefits.  
PASSED; APPROVED BY GOVERNOR, June 2.

AB 659-660 (Elliott)

To extend unemployment insurance coverage to domestic and agricultural workers.  
BURIED IN COMMITTEE.  
(All other bills to raise benefits and coverage, or or cut restrictions, similarly failed of action.)

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION  
AB 510 (Maloney)

Raises benefits for permanent disabilities from on the job injuries from \$30 a week to \$35; for temporary injuries from \$35 to \$40, and death benefits \$9,750 to \$12,500 for a widow with more than one child.  
PASSED; APPROVED BY GOVERNOR, June 6.

DISABILITY INSURANCE  
AB 602 (McCollister)

Increase benefits from \$35 to \$40; allows employers to supplement benefits up to 100% of wages; permits private insurance companies writing voluntary plans savings by eliminating about \$700,000 a year taxes.  
PASSED; APPROVED BY GOVERNOR, June 6.

MINIMUM WAGE  
AB 658 (Elliott)

To increase minimum wages to \$1.25 an hour.  
REFERRED TO INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR STUDY.

## F A I R E M P L O Y M E N T P R A C T I C E S

AB 971 (Rumford)

To set up a 5-member Fair Employment Practices Commission to investigate charges of discrimination in employment.  
PASSED Assembly Comm. on Govt. Efficiency and Economy; referred to Comm. on Ways and Means because of appropriation.  
DEFEATED there, 12 to 9. Rumford then caused withdrawal of bill from committee, and  
PASSED by Assembly, 48-17, on May 17. Senate Labor Comm. TABLED, by vote of 5 to 2, May 25.

AB 2300 (Hawkins)

To provide action for damages in cases of discrimination in employment, but no enforcement powers.  
PASSED Assembly, 45-15, May 13.  
TABLED by Senate Labor Comm., 5 to 2, May 25.

Sb 1765 (Richards)

Similar to Rumford Bill, AB 971.  
TABLED, May 25.



# CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE ALMANAC

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**ELEANOR RAYMOND**  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1954 EDITION

## Table of Contents

ELECTION AND LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR 1954.....	1
THE VOTER.....	2
Residence requirements. Registration. Time off for voting. How to write-in. Duties of Registrar and deputies.	
CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS.....	3
Age. Residence. Filing fees. Candidates' oath. Independents. Write-in.	
CROSS-FILING.....	4
DISTRICT REPRESENTATION.....	4
Federal and State.	
STATE INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL....	5
Initiative to the people; to the Legislature. Use of referendum. Public officers subject to recall.	
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION.....	6
Quota System. Eligibility and ineligibility for Naturalization. Revocation of Naturalized Citizenship. Alien Registration. Deportation.	
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	8
Chart of Organization .....	
EXECUTIVE .....	9
The White House Office. Members of the Cabinet. Departments.	

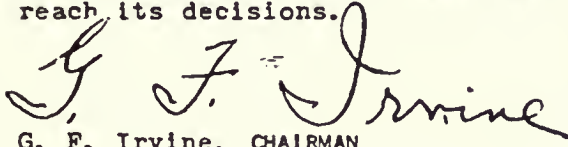
LEGISLATIVE SENATE	15
Chart of U. S. Senate .....	14
Members of U. S. Senate .....	16
U. S. Senate Organization .....	17
Standing Committees .....	18
HOUSE	18
Chart of House of Representatives .....	14
Members of House of Representatives .....	19
House Organization .....	21
Standing Committees .....	23
JUDICIAL .....	25
Supreme Court: Members, Jurisdiction; Trial Courts; Appellate Courts; Special Courts	
THE CALIFORNIA STATE GOVERNMENT	29
EXECUTIVE .....	25
Departments, Boards and Commissions	
LEGISLATIVE	29
Organization .....	
Sessions .....	
Route of a Bill in the Senate .....	
Route of a Bill in the Assembly .....	
The Budget Bill .....	
Bills to Governor .....	
Members of State Senate .....	33
Members of State Assembly .....	34
Interim Committees .....	36
Senate; Assembly; Joint	
JUDICIAL	38
California Supreme Court: Justices, Jurisdiction .....	
Trial Courts; Appellate Courts; Inferior Courts	
VOTING RECORDS	39
U. S. Senate .....	41
Vote Explanation .....	46
House of Representatives .....	48
Vote Explanation .....	54
State Senate .....	58
State Assembly .....	62
Vote Explanations, California Legislature .....	62
State Committee Votes .....	67
ELECTION STATISTICS, STATE & NATIONAL .....	70
Voter Registration, 1952; Presidential; U.S. Senate; U.S. House of Representatives; Governor; Lieutenant Governor; Attorney-General; State Senate, 1950; State Senate, 1952; State Assembly; Special Elections; Ballot Measure	

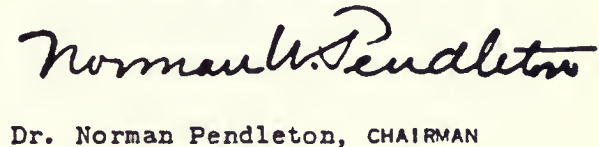


This is the official report of the fourth annual session of the California Legislative Conference. It includes the full reports of all the panels, a list of the organizations whose delegates attended the Conference and the names of the new Executive Board members.

Space limitations prevent the publication in full of all speeches. However we present here what we believe to be significant excerpts from the statements of most of the principal speakers.

The introduction represents our attempt to recreate the economic and political background against which this united gathering worked to reach its decisions.

  
G. F. Irvine, CHAIRMAN

  
Dr. Norman Pendleton, CHAIRMAN

Catherine Corbett, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Eleanor Raymond, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

---

The fourth annual meeting of the California Legislative Conference was the most representative since its formation.

When all present were accounted for there were 567 delegates and observers from 267 organizations. The largest labor delegation came from AFL with 83 delegates and observers from 36 locals and 9 councils. 16 farm organizations sent 31 representatives. Townsendites were there with 114 spokesmen from 60 clubs. Railroad Brotherhoods, CIO organizations, and minority groups provided the other large delegations, while substantial representation came from Veterans Posts, Child Care Councils and community organizations.

Delegates had bucked many obstacles to get to Fresno and to work through the two days of general and panel sessions.

There was the threatened gas shortage resulting from the wage dispute between Oil workers and employers.

There was the heat - never under 110 in the shade and no shade.

There was the expense, even fifty cent dollars had grown scarcer in the last year.

There was the expected and typical red-baiting. State Senator Hugh Burns, (Fresno), Vice-Chairman of the Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities (Better known as the Tenney Committee), had plastered "subversive" on the Conference and its Co-chairmen, George Irvine and Reuben Borough, during the early stages of Conference preparation.

But apparently no one ran for cover as a result of Burns 'red' bogey. Not one member of the representative Conference arrangements committee quit. Not one of the already selected delegates backed out. Not one of the invited organizations called or wrote to say they agreed with Burns.





### THE ARGUMENTS BY DELEGATE FRANK HENDRICKS -

"The Labor Panel recommends YES on Proposition 2, NO on Proposition 12. 400,000 workers are concerned in the beverage industries and could be out of work by passage of #12. Victory for #12 would return this State to the prohibition era and be a public invitation for the gangs of gunmen and thugs to settle down in California and go into their murderous business.

### THE PREVAILING ARGUMENTS AGAINST PROPOSITION #3

NO on #3 - The vote was unanimous.

Repeals the Full Train Crew Law. The present law is considered a safety measure. The State Legislature has twice refused to repeal the Full Crew Law.

### BY DELEGATE GEORGE MILLER, JR., CHAIRMAN OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMITTEE FOR RAILROAD SAFETY -

#### THE MILLION DOLLAR CAMPAIGN OF THE RAILROAD COMPANIES:

"Today in California the railroad companies have embarked on a million dollar campaign to eliminate from the statute books of the State of California the Full Crew Law. This isn't the first time that they have attempted to do this. Back in 1943, again in 1945, they attempted by a legislative process to eliminate Full Crew from the books. The legislature turned down the program of the railroad companies cold."

#### DECEIT AND NAMECALLING:

"Now they are embarking on this campaign of deceit, name calling, and other things to confuse the voter to the extent that he will vote for it in the belief that he is doing something for railroad labor and for all the people of the State of California. They have lined up a million and a quarter dollars to further confuse the public."

#### FREIGHT RATES ARE UP 43%:

"They are calling it the excess crew law, the full crew law, featherbedding, and the crowning touch - in the last two years railroad companies have increased their freight rates 43%. Many of our California farmers and shippers cannot compete in some markets. Now that they have been one of the greatest contributors to inflation, they want to lay the blame on the poor railway brakeman. We have shown that if they knocked off all the safety brakemen in the State of California there couldn't possibly be a reduction of 1% in freight rates."

#### THE SAME BUNCH OF BURGLERS:

"Here are the same bunch of burglars who raised their rates 43% saying everything will be alright if they knock off these brakemen . . . No one man can keep in running order the mile of freight cars regularly so that the trains can be in decent running order, so that trains do not represent a hazard. Even with the Full Crew Law railroading is hazardous. We have accidents."

#### ACCIDENTS WILL GO UP:

"During the war the Full Crew Law was lifted. Immediately the accident rates went up. After the war when the Full Crew Law was reinstated the accident rates went down. We find there has been a 75% decrease in casualties in the first full year of working under the Full Crew since the end of the war.

MEMORANDUM

E. IRVING

Western Calif

MR. MAJOR

Western Calif



## A Non-Partisan Legislative Service Organization

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Northern California  
L. MAJOR  
Southern California

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ELEANOR RAYMOND  
Executive Secretary  
●  
HALLIE TENNER  
Organizational Secretary



### STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO APPLICATION FOR RATE INCREASE BY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GAS COMPANY

December 26 1951

Once again the California Legislative Conference, a statewide, non-partisan legislative service organization, finds it necessary to appear before the California Public Utilities Commission and again to urge the Commission to stand careful guard over the rights of the harassed consumer by denying the application of a privately owned public utility - in this case the Southern California Gas Company - for an improvident rate increase.

In less than ten weeks the general public in this community is again being asked, and again without regard to ability to pay, or number of dependents, or type of income - whether fixed, pension or subsistence - to contribute increased revenues to a privately owned public utility which is presumably pledged to serve the interests and convenience of the public.

The Company asks for an interim rate increase, or surcharge of 11% by which the public will contribute to the Company an additional \$10 million per year; and it asks in its proposed new rates for an over all average increase of 18.36% to produce over \$17 million new income of which the largest proportion, about three-fourths, must come from General Service customers by an average increase in their gas bills of 20.6%. They also ask an increase of the basic minimum monthly rate from 90 cents to \$1.80, so that no matter how conservatively this product is used the consumer must pay double the present rate. This is what the Company asks.

It asks for these increases on some rather interesting guesses as to what the temperature will be like in the coming period, while admitting that there are large variations of average temperature from year to year. It asks for these increases based upon its judgment as to how attractive it must make its dividend picture in order to attract new capital. It asks for these increases based upon higher taxes, higher labor costs and higher costs of gas, all of which it seeks to pass on the public in order to retain the attractive dividend picture. It explains that it pays 16.72¢ per thousand cubic feet for gas delivered from the Texas fields to its pipelines at the Arizona border according to its figures for its "test year" based on rates effective November 1, 1951, and that for the same period it pays a much higher price, 22.83¢ per thousand cubic feet for gas sold to it by its



own affiliate Pacific Lighting Gas Supply Company, which is owned by the same parent company, Pacific Lighting Corp., according to Moody's Industrial Guide. What it does not explain is how much additional it costs per thousand cubic feet to transport the Texas gas in its pipelines to Los Angeles, so that we cannot tell how much cheaper the Texas gas actually is, nor, if the Texas gas is cheaper, why it buys only 52% of its gas from Texas.

In any event the consumer must ask some questions too. The first question is, where is the \$17 million coming from? The simple, incontrovertible fact is that the public, particularly the low income and pensioned groups, simply cannot afford to pay one cent more in living costs. As cost of living goes higher and higher, all of the public utilities break out in a rash of requests for increases, each one armed with a statistical tale of a temperature in its dividend department, and the harried consumer is presumed to be able to tighten his belt just one more notch, to be able to stand for just one more bite.

We suggest to the Commission that if new taxes is a reason, then all reason is on the side of the consumer, for the weight of the new tax law lies heavier on the wage earner than on the corporations; if higher labor costs cry for relief, then the cry of the suffering consumer must be the loudest, for his real wages, in terms of trying to live on his salary, have taken the deepest possible cut under the Wages and Prices stabilization provisions of the Defense Production Act of 1951, emasculated, as it is, to his disadvantage by the Capewhart Amendment and by unequal enforcement. The plight of the consumer is real and it is substantial, and he cannot alleviate it by dividing himself up into subsidiaries, siphoning the cream into one compartment and filling up the vacuum of the other compartment from some public source, for he is the public and has no other source to turn to.

We recommend, in fairness to the public, and so that we might have both sides shown, that the Commission make a part of this public record the President's Joint Committee on The Economic Report of June 1951, as well as the Report from the President's Council of Economic Advisors, the Statement of Secretary of Treasury John Snyder of June, 1951, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Heller Budget, and the Federal Reserve Bulletin of June 1951 - all of which point to the fact that three-fourths of our population do not make a living wage.

The request of the Southern California Gas Company for an interim relief boost in the aggregate of some \$10 million is even more preposterous than the request for an additional rate increase. In the furthest recesses of your memories, Gentlemen, can you ever recall a situation wherein the consuming public was ever granted an "interim consumers relief" in like manner while the question of lower rates was under consideration? Yet that example would be infinitely more equitable, for all the figures reveal that the consuming public needs an interim relief not as a matter of profit but as an essential of existence.

For the foregoing reasons, the California Legislative Conference, representing trade unions, farm, pension, minority, educational and other civic groups, strongly urges that the State Public Utilities Commission deny the application of the Southern California Gas Company for any increase in rates, interim or otherwise.

Statement submitted by  
Paul Major, Co-Chairman





# PRICES HAVE GONE UP!

Educational standards are slipping. Your child deserves additional funds for his education. Increased State support for schools.

**YES**  
**2**

**YES**  
**24**

California has nearly DOUBLED its population. Schools are desperately short. Authorizes bonds for construction of new schools.

**VOTE NO on 5**

Under pretext of catching "subversives", actually DESIGNED TO SILENCE the voice of your church, your labor union, your club, under penalty of added taxation. Will cost you untold millions a year to enforce.

**VOTE NO on 6**

Would scrap time-honored oath of allegiance to California Constitution and substitute Levering test oath, compelling political conformity under threat of unemployment and jail.

Stop Chambers of Commerce who take millions of YOUR TAX DOLLARS to support lobbies in Sacramento to block popular and necessary legislation.

**YES**  
**10**

**YES**  
**11**

Restores the civilized treatment of aged as it was before the shameful Chamber of Commerce fraud of 1949. Also extends medical benefits.

# TAKE THIS TO THE POLLS NOVEMBER 4th

PROPOSITIONS		YES	NO
#1	Veterans Farm and Home Bonds	X	
#2	PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDS	X	
#3	Taxation: Welfare Exemption of Non-Profit Schools		
#4	Payments to Needy Blind	X	
#5	SUBVERSIVE PERSONS AND GROUPS		X
#6	OATHS OF OFFICE		X
#7	Elections: Ballot Designation of Party Affiliation		
#8	Taxation: Church Buildings Under Construction		
#9	Taxation: College Buildings Under Construction		
#10	PUBLIC FUNDS: CERTAIN EXPENDITURES PROHIBITED	X	
#11	PAYMENTS TO AGED PERSONS	X	
#12	Military Service for Public Officers	X	
#13	Elections: Prohibiting Cross-Filing		
#14	Repealing Constitutional Restrictions on Chinese	X	
#15	Taxation: Insurance Companies and Banks		X
#16	Borough Form of City Government	X	
#17	Chiropractors		X
#18	Community Redevelopment Projects	X	
#19	Grand Juries		X
#20	State Funds: Hospital Construction	X	
#21	Superior Judges, Vacancies	X	
#22	Property Tax Statements		X
#23	Description of Property for Assessment		X
#24	SCHOOL BONDS	X	

california legislative conference  
408 south spring street - room 315 - los angeles 13 - mutual 1727





# Whimsical Warrior of State Politics

BY PHIL KERBY

When Ronald Reagan and Richard Schweiker became the odd couple of politics, I had an impulse to call my old friend Bob Kenny to get his reaction. I suspect that many of his friends had the same urge, but this time Bob Kenny, the most approachable of men, the most generous with his time, was not available and would never be again. He had died the week before.

Kenny, once state attorney general, state senator, judge and onetime candidate for governor of California, would have been delighted with Reagan's maneuver. To Kenny it would have been another marvelous act in the political comedy-drama in which he had been a player and observer for 50 years.

Reagan's unconventional strategem, with its high risk, would have appealed to the unconventional politician in Kenny, who took the play seriously, but not all the players all the time, himself included. In 1937, while running for the state Senate as a Democrat and a leader in Culbert Olson's successful campaign for governor, Kenny scandalized regular Democrats by endorsing a Republican friend for attorney general.

The friend happened to be Earl Warren. Kenny's endorsement was not for friendship alone. In a letter that foreshadowed his later career on the Supreme Court, Warren, asking for support, wrote Kenny: "I believe that the American concept of civil rights should include not only an observance of our constitutional Bill of Rights, but also the absence of arbitrary action by government in every field and the existence of a spirit of fair play on the part of public officials toward all that will prevent government from using ever-present opportunities to abuse power through harassment of the individual."

Ironically, it was Warren (who later defeated Kenny for governor) and the grotesque political era after World War II that ended Kenny's political career—this and his inability to bend before the political winds of the day. Still, had he decided to join the cold war orthodoxy, Kenny could have remained influential in Demo-

cratic politics and could have been part of the Democratic revival of the next decade. But the whimsical warrior of California politics had more steel in his makeup than did those fierce fellows who trumpeted their defiance of foreign foes but turned tail before the slightest threat to their own careers.

Returning to law practice, Kenny accepted the defense of unpopular political clients in opposition to the House Committee on Un-American Activities, whose idea of defending the nation was to get a department store ribbon clerk fired for signing an anti-Franco petition 20 years before.

Kenny engaged in no stupendous wrestling match with himself over good and evil. Politicians who permit the public to view such agony usually stage-manage the event to soften the impact of their predictable surrender. Kenny did what he did almost casually, although he understood that the cost was exile from the public life he relished. As a politician he had a mortal flaw. He lacked the requisite killer instinct to garrote either a principle, a friend or an opponent.

His weapon in politics was a civilized sense of humor. The barbs sometimes were sharp, yet never tipped with poison. About one opponent he said, "He has a mind like a miller bug—it just skates on the surface." Asked years ago by John Gunther where a former governor was living, Kenny replied, "East Oblivion."

Kenny dwelt there for years himself until former Gov. Edmund G. Brown appointed him to the same Superior Court Kenny had left 30 years earlier. One of his characteristic decisions knocked out the Los Angeles County loyalty oath, which was not an affirmative oath at all, but one of those odious test oaths that had multiplied in the country like toads in a rainstorm.

Accomplished in the law, Bob Kenny was a learned, literate and gentle man whose knowledge and interests extended well beyond the courtroom. But I have left out the most engaging reason why his friendships cut across all lines. Knowing him was just sheer fun.





Western Office

Room 3, 1256 Westwood Blvd.  
Los Angeles 24, CaliforniaFACT SHEET

## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF 1,000?

It is an ad hoc fund-raising organization whose goal is to raise \$100,000 for the election of Peace Candidates throughout the country.

## HOW DID IT ORIGINATE?

A conference of peace candidates was held in Chicago on Aug.4-5 under the auspices of the National Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy, Voters for Peace (Chicago) and Political Action for Peace (New England) and attended by representatives and observers from National Friends Committee on Legislation, Women for Peace, ADA, UAW, Californians for Liberal Representation, and others. The establishment of the National Committee of 1,000 was one of the recommendations of this conference.

## WHAT WILL THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF 1,000 DO?

The immediate project will be to obtain 1,000 national sponsors who will contribute \$100 each. The funds will be used to buy ads, print literature, and make possible effective and meaningful campaigns for approximately twenty Peace Candidates.

## WHAT ARE ITS LONG RANGE GOALS?

This committee seeks to establish a national climate in which serious debate and discussion can flourish in regard to the crucial issues before mankind: Can there be an end to the nuclear arms race? What are the alternatives? How can we now begin to plan for reversion to a peacetime economy? What are the obstacles to a workable disarmament agreement? How can they be overcome? These issues are not now being discussed in meaningful terms, except by only a handful of candidates for Congress and the U.S. Senate. It is these candidates that the National Committee of 1,000 hopes to support and elect.

## WHO ARE ITS SPONSORS? (Partial list)

Among the sponsors of the National Committee of 1,000 are David Reisman, Harvard Sociologist; W. H. Ferry, Fund for the Republic; Gifford Phillips, publisher, Frontier Magazine; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prizewinner; Clarence E. Pickett, Friends Committee on Legislation; Seniel Ostrow, Pres., Sealy Mattress Co.; Isidore Ziferstein, SANE Nuclear Policy Committee. (Organizations listed for identification purposes only).

## WHO ARE THE PEACE CANDIDATES?

Senate: H. Stuart Hughes (Ind.-Mass.), William Meyer (Dem.-Vt.)  
William Osborne Hart (Ind.-Wisc.)

House: John O'Connell, (Dem.-Cal.), George Brown (Dem.-Cal.), Edward Roybal (Dem.-Cal.), Knox Mellon (Dem.-Cal.), Helen Bliss (Dem.-N.H.), Elizabeth Boardman (Rep.-Mass.), Alice Franklin Bryant (Dem.-Wash.), Robert Cosbey (Ind.-Ill.), Harrop Freeman (Lib.-N.Y.), William Hefner (Dem.-Mass.), Sidney Lens (Ind.-Ill.), Rev. Alva Tompkins (Ind.-Ill.), Caroline Ramsey (Rep.-Md), Harry Purvis (Ind.-N.Y.).  
(Partial list)

## WHAT DO THEY SUPPORT?

Naturally these candidates do not agree with each other or the sponsoring organizations on every specific issue. In general, however, they would endorse the following measures: (A) Stepped-up research by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency into the economic and political factors of the prevention of war and the reconversion to peace. (B) American initiatives which will help improve the climate for agreements on a nuclear test ban and world disarmament; (C) Strengthening the U.N.'s peace keeping machinery; and (D) Greater planning to channel the savings from disarmament into a war against poverty and ignorance at home and throughout the world.



# Californians for Liberal Representation

133

*Southern Division*

P. O. BOX 3116 INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

May 7, 1962

Dear Friend:

We address this urgent appeal to issues-minded men and women who have been active in partisan politics and to members of non-partisan organizations whose interests have been on particular issues, such as peace, civil liberties and civil rights.

The next few weeks are crucial for three fine liberal candidates who should go to Congress from this area. They face a most difficult test in the June primary. If we fail to support them now, we will not be able to work for them later. The crucial date is June 5th, the day of the Primary Election!

We are asking your support for candidates who are convinced that alternatives to the deadly thermonuclear arms race must be found, who believe that building of fallout shelters and increasing of our destructive capacity is not the way to enhance our security, who are certain that America can have prosperity without unprecedented armaments spending.

We are asking your support for candidates who will give more than lip service to the continuing battles for equal opportunity and human rights, who will offer creative leadership toward eliminating the barriers to equality in employment, education and housing.

We are asking your support for candidates who are dedicated to our deeply-rooted American principles of civil liberties, who have enough faith in the judgment of the American people to uphold the Constitutional freedom of the individual and who oppose the use of Congressional investigative power for non-legislative purposes or in violation of the Bill of Rights.

Finally, because of California's independent political tradition and also because of the concentrated efforts of the Birch-like groups in our state, we are facing an unprecedented test of beliefs and political outlook in this election. We know that you have taken a consistent stand on liberal issues. As a result of the many activities of people like yourself, these issues have been brought to the attention of thousands of Californians. Now is the time to advance the over-all liberal cause still further by helping to elect these liberals to Congress.





Our immediate task is to assist in the primary election of the following three liberal Congressional candidates: George Brown, 29th CD, Edward Roybal, 30th CD, and Jerry Pacht, 31st CD. Enclosed is an envelope indicating the various kinds of help needed in these campaigns. Search your conscience and act NOW for liberal representation.

Sincerely,

CO-SPONSORS:

Steve Allen  
Dr. Rudolf Carnap  
Arthur Carstens  
Dr. John Caughey  
S. Mark Doran, M.D.  
Miles Hollister

Cricket Levering  
Eason Monroe  
Dr. Raymond J. Murphy  
Seniel Ostrow  
Frank C. Owen  
James Peck

Gifford Phillips  
Rev. Ernest Pipes  
Rod Serling  
Lionel Steinberg  
A.L. Wirin  
Paul Ziffren

CO-SIGNERS:

Ruth Abraham  
Hugh H. Anderson  
Howard Berman  
David R. Cadwell

Miriam Colf  
Phyllis Edgecombe  
Jean Gerard  
Howard J. Green, Sr.  
John Lake

John G. Lozano  
Hugh Manes  
Frederic Meyers  
Henry A. Waxman  
Joseph Wolf

(Partial list)

Facts About The Candidates

- 29th C.D.: George Brown - Assemblyman  
Authored bill giving public employees right to organize.  
Member Governor's Advisory Committee on Housing
- 30th C.D.: Edward Roybal - Councilman  
Author City Ordinance Against Discrimination in Housing  
Active in American Public Health Association
- 31st C.D.: Jerry Pacht - Attorney  
Former co-chairman Legal Redress Committee N.A.A.C.P.  
Proposed Automation-Retraining provisions in National Democratic Platform-1960.



in carrying out its Program of Objectives, CLM organizes many educational and fund-raising activities. Among them are:

- Sponsored appearances of the late SENATOR ESTES KEFAUVER in behalf of CLR-endorsed candidates in '62
- Held SEMINAR ON POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES at Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara in '63
- Raised funds for CORE at reception for author JAMES BALDWIN in '63
- Conducted five seminars on the NEGRO REVOLT AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS at the University Religious Conference in '63
- Raised funds for MISSISSIPPI SUMMER PROJECT of voter registration at reception for CONGRESSMAN PHILLIP BURTON (D-San Francisco) in '64
- Presented SENATOR WAYNE MORSE the Estes Kefauver Award at Dinner and Public Meeting prior to the '64 presidential election
- Produced THE SOUND OF '64, a widely-shown film in which noted commentator William Winter interviewed Senator Wayne Morse on Vietnam
- Sponsored appearances of CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS (D-Michigan) during the Selma, Alabama crisis
- Held conference on Congressional Reform with CONGRESSMAN RICHARD BOLLING (D-Missouri) in '64
- Sponsored appearances of CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM RYAN (D-New York) during Los Angeles municipal elections in '65
- Brought SENATOR ERNEST GRUENING to Los Angeles in '65 to speak on Vietnam
- Honored JULIAN BOND, legislator-elect from Georgia, at reception and meeting in '66

**Southern Calif.**

- Steve Allen
- Paul Bullock
- Prof. John Caughey
- LaRae Caughey
- Elois Davis
- Phyllis Edgcombe
- Robert Feiner
- John Anson Ford
- Harvey Furgatch
- Kay Hardman
- Willard Hastings
- Eidon Hartman
- Leonard Hirsch
- J. Stuart Innerst
- Kathleen Johnson
- L. Robert Joseph
- Crocket Levering
- Rabbi Albert M. Lewis
- John A. Lindon, M.D.
- Hugh R. Manes
- Frank E. Munoz
- Prof. Raymond Murphy
- Gifford Phillips
- Herschel Rosenthal
- Robert Ryan
- Rev. Paul Sawyer
- Alan Sieroty
- A. L. Wirin
- Joseph Wolf

**Northern Calif.**

- Marshall Axelrod
- Susan Bierman
- Dr. Arthur K. Bierman
- Franklyn K. Brann
- Joan Brann
- Malcolm Burnstein
- Joseph Close
- George M. Cowell
- Jerome Fishkin
- Ben Ginden
- Marylouise Lovett
- Keith Murray
- John A. O'Connell
- Paul Phillips
- Michael Schneider
- Jules Seitz
- Dr. Richard Sirohman
- John Thorne
- Robert W. Tuttle
- Marshall Windmiller
- Thomas Winnett

**Californians for Liberal Representation**

1256 Westwood Boulevard  
 Los Angeles, California 90024 (Southern)  
 Flood Building, 870 Market Street, Room 470  
 San Francisco, California 94102 (Northern)

are you an

# Independent Liberal?

- FOR WORLD PEACE?
- EQUALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE?
- PROTECTION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES?
- MEANINGFUL WAR ON POVERTY?

If you believe in these goals,

CLR would like to suggest

how you can be

politically effective...





## Californians For Liberal Representation

1256 Westwood Blvd. - Westwood 24, Calif.

GR 7-1268 - BR 2-3636

1965

### URGENT ELECTION MEMO

In response to requests for further information regarding CLR's endorsement of James Edward Jones for Board of Education, Seat No. 2, we submit the following memo for your thoughtful consideration:

We in CLR believe the civil rights movement is the most important force for progress in our nation today. This movement is not only shaking the pillars of segregation which uphold all that is repressive and backward in our nation, but it is also addressing itself more and more to other basic questions of concern to us as liberals -- poverty, civil liberties, and foreign policy. In the last weeks, there has been an outburst of expression from Negro leaders exposing the hypocrisy of a foreign policy purporting to defend democracy overseas while we fumble and lag in guaranteeing basic citizenship rights here at home.

This dynamic force for progress is now placing its emphasis on political action and representation. While the most dramatic efforts are taking place today in Alabama, the goal is full political participation in all areas and we in "enlightened" communities surely must not lag. In this connection, an historic development took place this year in Los Angeles when, on the initiation of the United Civil Rights Committee, there was held a unique convention. The purpose was to choose one candidate to run for the only open seat on the Board, Seat No.2, thus affording the greatest opportunity to win community representation. CLR is proud to have participated in this free and open convention which saw hundreds of delegates from 116 organizations overwhelmingly endorse James Edward Jones to make this race.

In addition to our basic desire to assist and support this development toward unity around one candidate, CLR considered the personal qualifications of the leading contenders for Office No.2 as well as the positions they support. Jones stands for use of federal funds, for equality in education as it affects both teachers and students, for increased teacher pay, for academic freedom, for separation of church and state (no prayer in school), etc. With a background ranging from work in the United Mine Workers, to teaching and counseling, to settlement house activities, to leadership in interracial church councils, to active participation in the civil rights movement, including his recent participation in voter rights activities in Selma, Alabama, with Dr. Martin Luther King, we believe James Edward Jones is eminently qualified for this post.

Our judgement was confirmed by the actions of the Committee for Better Schools, the organization which supported Mary Tinglof, Ralph Richardson, and Georgiana Hardy. This organization, through its screening committee, conducted exhaustive interviews and narrowed down its selection to three candidates, including James Edward Jones. The Committee for Better Schools screening committee announced its conclusion that all three candidates were equally well qualified. Failing to reach a consensus around one candidate, the Committee for Better Schools made no endorsement in the



primary. We are gratified, however, to note that many of its leading participants, including the chairman, are supporting the Jones candidacy.

We believe qualification for a seat on the Board should not be determined solely on grounds of technical proficiency. If this were the only criteria, there would be no need for an election -- a civil service examination might better serve the purpose. Rather than technical proficiency, we believe the overall philosophy of the Board member, his ability to represent the community, and his dedication to excellence in education for all children should be the major criteria. We are reminded that Mary Tinglof, perhaps our most outstanding Board member, came to that position without the background of a professional educator.

We in CLR support Jones, not because he is a Negro, but because, in addition to his own personal qualifications, he represents a movement for progress. He was chosen by a broadly-based coalition of organizations and individuals concerned with education for today's world, with representation of all sections of the community, with concern for all children in our school system. On the Board, he will be responsive, and responsible, to that coalition.

As liberals, we have long sought to help build, and participate in, a coalition of minority groups, labor, and liberals, working together for a common goal. A long step toward such a coalition was taken at the convention which chose one candidate for Seat No. 2 on the Board. The morale -- and the fate -- of this coalition rests in good part on what happens on April 6th. We urge you to support this movement -- support the candidate of this movement -- work for, vote for James Edward Jones for Board of Education, Seat No. 2.

Volunteers are needed at Jones Campaign headquarters:  
4828 Figueroa  
Los Angeles  
233-3241

Financial donations can be sent to:

Californians for Liberal Representation  
1256 Westwood Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California





# CALIFORNIANS FOR LIBERAL REPRESENTATION

138

1725 BEVERLY BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90026 • (213) 483-3690

April 21 1972

TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF C L R

It is with regret that I wish to tender my resignation from the office of Administrative Secretary and from the CLR Board of Directors. I have come to this decision reluctantly after much deliberation. However, as one of the founders of CLR I wish to share my views with the Board at this time.

About a year ago I had expressed privately to some of our active Board members that, after twenty-five years of full-time political activity in executive and administrative capacities (sometimes as a professional, mostly on a volunteer basis), I now wish to decrease my involvement. For reasons of health, lack of energy and personal family problems and decisions, I find it impossible to continue my intense role at a "political desk".

I find that the myriad responsibilities I have assumed for the past several years I no longer am able to undertake; these include preparation and coordination of mailings, public events, serving as spokesman at public hearings, drafting position papers, fund appeals, invitations, press releases, reports to CLR "Investors", taking and transcribing of Minutes of Board and special meetings, etc. etc. I hasten to add, however, that my life has been enriched enormously and that I have received far greater rewards than the contributions I may have made.

My reason for leaving the Board, at least temporarily, stems from my belief that the privilege of serving as a CLR Board member also carries with it a responsibility. At the very least, attendance at Board meetings with some regularity should be a requisite. It serves no useful purpose for a Board member to attend only occasionally to cast a crucial vote. Only through continual probing together can we hope to find solutions to today's enormous political problems.

## OFFICERS

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ARTHUR CARSTENS

vice-chairmen

RICHARD CALDERON

REV. JAMES M. HARGETT

ESTHER JACKSON

LEONARD LEVY

RICK TUTTLE

coordinator

JACK BERMAN

administrative secretary

ELEANOR WAGNER

treasurer

SANFORD WEINER



In my opinion, the concept of CLR has been and continues to be one of the most important independent political coalition vehicles in our state. The key words here are independent coalition. CLR never was intended to serve as a "non-partisan" arm of the Democratic Party.

From its inception ten years ago, CLR's concept was to bring together viable movements, concerned with the great issues of the day, to express those issues and those concerns through the electoral process. Just a few examples in our CLR history:

- 1962 On the issues of anti-HUAC and anti-war, we brought together SANE, ACLU, CDC, MAPA, UAW, and others, through the campaigns of George Brown and Ed Roybal;
- 1965 On the issue of black representation, we played an active role in the black community convention and thereafter conducted an education process in the white liberal community through the campaign of the Reverend James Jones, Board of Education;
- 1967 On the issue of Mexican American representation, active in that community's convention and played leading role in coalition campaign of Dr. Julian Nava, Board of Education;
- 1968 On the issue of peace, initiated Peace Slate in '68 and brought together key groups through campaign of Eugene McCarthy for President;
- 1969 On the issues of black representation and crisis in the cities, CLR made its greatest impact in the Primary coalition campaign of Councilman Tom Bradley for Mayor.

It would be well for each of us to keep in mind that it is the movement or the issue with which we are primarily concerned. The election campaign which CLR selects must be built around issues and movements, rather than the old approach of building a campaign around a candidate.

A current example is the campaign of Senator George McGovern for President. His campaign is allied with the liberation movements of the blacks, Chicanos and women, with the movements to end unemployment, unfair taxation and poverty, and with the youth and peace movements to end the war.



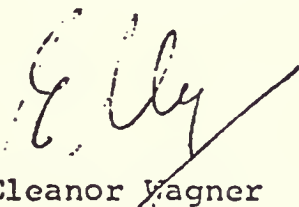


In the past ten years, the California and national political scenes have changed drastically. No longer can we rely on the old liberal coalition of black and white middle-class intellectuals and certain organized labor groups. To be truly viable and relevant to today's movements which are demanding an end to all wars, poverty, unemployment, racism, and unfair taxation, a different, or greatly expanded, coalition is essential.

The coalition must include, in ever greater numbers, representation from the poor, black, Mexican American, Asian, Jewish, women, youth, concerned sections of labor and the unemployed, as well as traditional middle-class liberals.

Meaningful change - not just re-arranging the old power structure with different players - can come about only by providing the opportunity for power to those who systematically have been denied power.

Yes, the exigencies of politics have changed. And in order to survive, justify its existence, and be effective, the CLR Board must also change. Until the Board reflects the urgent political needs of its members, through a broadly-based coalition, it will suffer endless debate, reams of rhetoric, and accomplish precious little. Our perilous times require something more than this - much more.



Eleanor Wagner



# COALITION FOR FAIR REAPPORTIONMENT IN 1971

2351 WEST 3rd STREET • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90057 • Phone (213) 380-8940

5/18/71

*Representation: A Moral Issue!*

Our State Legislature is now deciding the political future of the Mexican-American people for the next ten years. Every ten years the State Senate and Assembly are charged with the re-drawing of boundary lines (to comply with the new census figures) so that equitable representation can be assured.

In the past, the Chicano community has been deliberately gerrymandered so that the 3,000,000 Mexican-Americans of California have not had a voice in our government.

The minority vote has always been viewed by politicians as the spoils of victory ...to be divided up solely for the benefit of incumbent politicians.

We need your experience and participation in order to set up community organization to apply pressure on our elected officials - to bring about just and equitable representation for the Chicanos who comprise approximately 15% of our population. Please attend!

* CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP *
* THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1971 - 7:15 P.M. *
* YWCA STUDIO CLUB - Hollywood *
* 1215 Lodi Place *
* (1 block N. of Santa Monica Blvd. *
* between Vine & Gower) *
* *

HERMAN SILLAS  
Acting Chairman

P.S. Wide participation is essential. Please acquaint other groups and individuals with this proposed action and urge them to attend our meeting.



EDUCATION. There now is little concealment of the fact that black and brown children receive inferior education. The funds received in ghetto areas are less. One reason: the tax base is lower because of lower-income of minority families. Equipment is inferior, maintenance of school buildings is inadequate, classroom load is heavier, teacher selection and orientation ill-prepared. This highly complex issue is now reaching crisis proportions and requires complete overhauling, in taxes, equalizing of school districts, ethnic balance, bi-lingual studies, curriculum, etc.

The fruits of quality education for all school children would be enormous: reduced frustrations of black and brown children would go a long way toward solving campus unrest in junior and senior high schools, and on junior and state college campuses. To produce a new generation of educated young people who take pride in their equal opportunity to share in the potential of an exciting future can provide one of the great rewards in our time.

QUERY: Would not additional black and Mexican-American legislators be more sensitive to the need for greater appropriations in all school district areas? Would they not be more responsive to their own constituency who have the power to vote them out of office?



# CALIFORNIANS FOR LIBERAL REPRESENTATION

143

1725 BEVERLY BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90026 • (213) 483-3690

## CLR BOARD OF DIRECTORS STATEMENT 27th SENATORIAL DISTRICT SPECIAL ELECTION (6/22/71)

One of the single most important political facts of life in California today is that the Mexican American community is almost totally unrepresented in state and national government. Despite a population of three million in California - the largest ethnic minority in the state - this community can count only one congressman, two assemblymen, and not a single state senator!

These facts are no accident. They are the result of blindness, racism, and sheer neglect by both major parties, as well as a calculated plan in the 1950 and '60 reapportionments that split the Mexican American population into a myriad of districts. This may have served the needs of the Democratic and Republican wheelhorses, but it also guaranteed that no single district would have enough Mexican American voters to exert political muscle.

Needless to say, we believe the situation to be morally and politically indefensible.

In this light, the senatorial election in the 27th district on June 22nd takes on special significance. This district has the largest population of Mexican Americans in the state of California. If a Mexican American candidate is not elected in the 27th where the potential is the greatest to correct this gerrymandered inequity, in what senatorial district can a Mexican American be elected in the entire state?

We think the answer is obvious, and it is necessary to say that if we really believe in Mexican American representation now, we must support the principle of representation in the 27th senatorial district special election.

Californians for Liberal Representation will support this principle and we therefore endorse the candidacy of Alex Garcia.

### OFFICERS

chairman  
ARTHUR CARSTENS

vice-chairmen  
RICHARD CALDERON  
REV. JAMES H. HARGETT  
ESTHER JACKSON  
LEONARD LEVY  
RICK TUTTLE

coordinator  
JACK BERMAN

administrative secretary  
ELEANOR WAGNER

treasurer  
SANFORD WEINER

### SPONSORS (Southern California)

STEVE ALLEN  
RUTH ABRAHAM  
BARBARA AVEDON  
DR. MELVIN AVEDON  
WALTER BREMOND  
PAUL BULLOCK  
PROF. JOHN CAUGHEY  
LAREE CAUGHEY  
PHYLLIS EDGEUMBE  
ROBERT FEINER  
REV. JERRY FORD  
JOHN ANSON FORD  
HARVEY FURGATCH  
PROF. RALPH GUZMAN  
KAY HARDMAN  
J. STUART INNERST  
KATHLEEN JOHNSON  
ELOIS DAVIS JONES  
SAMUEL KALISH  
LEONARD LEVY  
RABBI ALBERT M. LEWIS  
DR. JOHN A. LINDON  
VICTOR LUDWIG  
JOHN McTERNAN  
PROF. RAYMOND MUFFY  
DR. JULIAN NAVA  
LEONARD NIMOY  
GIFFORD PHILLIPS  
RAMON PONCE  
CARL REINER  
HERSCHEL ROSENTHAL  
ALAN SIEROTY  
GILBERT (BUD) SIMONSON  
MARNESBA TACKETT  
MILDRED WALTER  
HENRY WAXMAN  
MAURICE WEINER  
A. L. WIRIN





## 27th Senatorial District Special Election : (6/22/71)

Mr. Garcia has been an Assemblyman from the 40th district for over three years and was a former aide to Congressman Edward R. Roybal. While we do not agree with all the positions he has taken in the legislature, he has a strong record on legislation involving labor, education, tax reform, and the 18-year-old-vote. We believe he merits support from liberals and progressives throughout the state in this important contest.

In supporting Mr. Garcia, we also acknowledge the excellent programs and records of other candidates who have entered this race. It is our hope that we can continue to work together in the future. However, we are committed to two principles that guided us in making our decision:

This election is more than a contest among individuals. A principle is at stake, and we believe it is more important than finding a candidate who might come closest to fitting our traditional liberal views. Basic changes are not made by political parties but by movements that force political change. A Mexican American community with full political voice is absolutely imperative if such a movement is to be built.

In supporting Mr. Garcia, we are also endorsing the position of the overwhelming majority of leadership in the Mexican American community, many of whom have worked with us in the past. We share their feeling that the election of Alex Garcia could be another step towards achieving full and equal representation.



# Californians for Liberal Representation 145

1256 Westwood Boulevard • Los Angeles 24, California • GR 7-1268 BR 2-3636

1964

FORD PHILLIPS  
Chairman

## URGENT CAMPAIGN MEMO:

MUR CARSTENS  
VICE CHAIRMAN

Today we face the most important election in thirty years. The issue is clear -- we must not only defeat the reactionary Republican ticket but must bend every effort for the overwhelming repudiation of the philosophy of Goldwaterism.

MRS  
SOUTHERN DIVISION

In Southern California, victory is by no means assured and we must strive for large pluralities to insure that right-wing influence is cut down to size. In addition, we have a number of liberal candidates who must be elected and re-elected.

ALLEN  
DULLOCK  
JOHN CAUGHEY  
CAUGHEY  
D. DAVIS  
SIS EDGECUMBE  
ST FEINER  
NISON FORD  
Y FURGATCH  
BRODMAN  
PRO HASTINGS  
PHARTMAN  
RD HIRSCH  
RT INNERST  
EEN L. JOHNSON  
ERT JOSEPH  
ET LEVERING  
ALBERT M. LEWIS  
L. LINDON, M.D.  
H. MANES  
E. MUNOZ  
RAYMOND MURPHY  
PACHT  
HEL ROSENTHAL  
ET RYAN  
AUL SAWYER  
IEROTY  
F SINGLETON  
WALTER  
RIN  
WOLF

Newspaper reports indicate that Goldwater had 9000 campaign workers in this area in the primary. Can we match that number with our own corps of dedicated volunteers?

To maximize our effectiveness, for ease of communication and for greater mobility, Californians for Liberal Representation is now organizing CAMPAIGN TEAMS. A team is composed of six to eight members who pledge themselves to a given amount of campaign work during October and/or on election day. Each team will be assigned work in a key Congressional district - to elect a liberal, to defeat the Goldwater ticket, and to defeat the segregation amendment, Prop. 13. Many types of work can be done by a CLR team:

- \* A precinct team can cover a block of precincts
- \* A clerical team can put out campaign mail
- \* A fund-raising team can hold a house party or coffee hour
- \* A telephone team can man a telephone center on election day
- \* A sound truck team can service a key campaign

MRS  
SOUTHERN DIVISION  
BEEEMAN  
LYN BRANN  
URTON  
DAMS FINNEY  
L. M. KOCH  
J. KIELIGER  
MARINE  
MOORE  
O'CONNELL  
D SEARLE  
R THOMAS  
T W. TUTTLE  
G. WHITAKER  
WINNETT  
AL LIST

We need you NOW -- to organize your own team or join an existing team. Please mail the tear-slip below in the enclosed envelope. Our deadline for team organization is Oct. 1st. Let us dedicate ourselves for one month to the defeat of the right-wing!

To: Californians for Liberal Representation

I will organize  join  a CLR campaign team to elect liberals and defeat Goldwater and Prop. 13. I prefer the following work:

Precinct  Telephone  Fund Raising  Clerical  Sound car

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



# CALIFORNIANS FOR LIBERAL REPRESENTATION

146

1725 BEVERLY BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90026 • (213) 483-3690

196

ARTHUR CARSTENS, Chairman

MAURICE WEINER, Executive Director

## ROLL CALL OF ACHIEVEMENTS ( Partial List )

- \* Provided major contributions to the peace candidacies of Congressmen George Brown, Jr. (Los Angeles) and Phillip Burton (San Francisco) in their first crucial election campaigns;
- \* Gave substantial support to the candidacies of Assemblymen John Burton and Willie Brown (San Francisco) and Assemblywoman Yvonne Brathwaite, Assemblyman David Roberti and Councilman Tom Bradley (Los Angeles);
- \* Provided the largest contribution (almost \$9,000 in funds and services) in the landmark election campaign of Dr. Julian Nava to the Los Angeles Board of Education;
- \* Assisted substantially in the campaigns of the successful Democratic nominee Henry Waxman (61st AD, Los Angeles) and in the historical campaign for Mexican-American representation to the State Senate of Richard Calderon (narrowly defeated);
- \* Presented the CLR Kefauver Award (of \$1,000 each) to Senators Wayne Morse, Joseph Clark, George McGovern;
- \* Brought to California as the guest of CLR such national political leaders as Congressman John Conyers of Michigan, Richard Bolling of Missouri, William Fitzpatrick Ryan of New York;
- \* Made substantial contributions to the election campaigns of Senators Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of Alaska;
- \* The expertise of CLR's political leadership is acknowledged to be the major factor for the successful campaigns of the Reverend James Jones and Dr. Julian Nava to the Los Angeles Board of Education, in which CLR's staff (paid and volunteer) served in the top policy-making capacity;
- \* CLR has utilized its money and manpower resources for voter registration projects in the black community, as well as for other major civil rights campaigns;
- \* It is CLR that has consistently raised the issue with the white liberal community that it must find solutions to the problems in the ghettos and barrios - and that it must support the principle of minority representation on every level of government, as a positive step toward changing our white racist society.
- \* The candidacy of Senator Eugene McCarthy for President was endorsed by CLR before any other major organization in our state. Many of our Board members and sponsors have been in the leadership of the McCarthy campaign since its inception and will attend the Chicago Convention as part of the California delegation.

### *Sponsors (Southern California)*

Ive Allen, Paul Bullock, Prof. John Caughey, LaRee Caughey, Elois Davis, Phyllis Edgcombe, Robert Feiner, Rev. Jerry Ford, John Anson Ford, Arvey Furgatch, Kay Hardman, Rev. James Hargett, Eldon Hartman, Willard Hastings, J. Stuart Innerst, Kathleen Johnson, L. Robert Joseph, Cricket Vering, Leonard Levy, Rabbi Albert M. Lewis, John A. Lindon, M.D., Frank E. Munoz, Prof. Raymond Murphy, Gifford Phillips, Herschel Rosenthal, Robert Ryan, Rev. Paul Sawyer, Alan Sieroty, Gilbert (Bud) Simonson, A. L. Wirin, Joseph Wolf. (Partial list).





2401 Moreno Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90039

---

December 28 1973

To: Ruth Abraham  
Jack Berman  
Clara Cooper  
Mildred Simon  
Rick Tuttle  
Maury Weiner

*Art Carstens*

From: Elly Wagner

Here 'tis - my New Year's present. Enjoy! I did.

When I first accepted this assignment, I agreed only to research and codify our history. But in the delving, I found myself re-living many of our struggles and search for meaning in this complex business all of us have been involved in for so very long.

And so, I have tried to present some depth and continuity - not so much chronologically, but rather on those qualities which, in fact, do make CLR somewhat unique and especially valuable in our kind of politics.

I would hope that whatever editing there be, will be done from the viewpoint of sharpening the copy rather than for the sake of brevity. The history is impressive; let us share the record.

The material can be useful in a variety of ways, in my opinion:

- 1) to send to our sustainers and more-or-less regular contributors with a return envelope for money;
- 2) to present to potential new Board members for their information and background;
- 3) as an historical document, to send to certain candidates and key leaders, particularly in the minority communities.

With love and good wishes for a peaceful New Year to you and your families,

*Elly*





FIRST ROUGH DRAFT

HISTORY, OBJECTIVES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS - 1962 through 1973

C L R

Note: There are many definitions of the word "liberal". In current American political parlance it usually refers to one who is somewhat less than courageous in the matter of conviction, or who is willing to compromise, accommodate, take the expedient way out. CLR, however, views the word "liberal" as it was intended in Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd Edition Unabridged:

as an adjective: "not bound by authority, orthodox tenets, or established forms in political or religious philosophy"; also "freedom from prejudice or narrowness";

as a noun: "one who is liberal in thought or principles; one who favors greater freedom in political or religious matters."

Since May 1962, CLR has played a unique, independent and innovative role in California liberal politics. Oftimes under great stress and at odds with established forms, CLR consistently has stimulated political awareness of the need for independent coalitions.

#### MOVEMENT ORIENTED

CLR takes pride in the variety and number of firsts in its twelve-year history in California politics.

Indeed the motivation for its birth in 1962 was to give voice and representation, through the electoral process, to three dynamic movements in California:

Peace - Civil Liberties - Minority Representation

In 1962 CLR was in the forefront of the successful first campaigns to elect GEORGE BROWN JR. and EDWARD ROYBAL to Congress. We observed then that the indispensable key to victory was to build the broadest coalitions around the issues selected as primary at the time.

The original Board of Directors included leaders in the American Civil Liberties Union, California Democratic Council, California Federation of Young Democrats, Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy, Women Strike for Peace, and in the Black, Mexican American, Jewish, concerned sections of labor, and academic communities.



ELECTION FIRSTS

In addition to those of GEORGE BROWN JR and EDWARD ROYSAL, there have been many outstanding first election campaigns in which CLR played a key role. Here are some of our major firsts:

1964	PHILLIP BURTON	5th Congressional District
1964	WILLIE BROWN	18th Assembly District
1964	JOHN BURTON	19th Assembly District
1965	JAMES EDWARD JONES	L.A. Board of Education
1966	ANTHONY BEILENSON	26th Senatorial District
1966	YVONNE BRATHWAITE	63rd Assembly District
1966	ALAN SIEROTY	59th Assembly District
1967	JULIAN NAVA	L.A. Board of Education
1968	HENRY WAXMAN	61st Assembly District
1969	KENNETH WASHINGTON	L.A. Community College Trustee
1969	EDMUND G BROWN JR	L.A. Community College Trustee
1970	RON DELLUMS	7th Congressional District
1970	PETER CHACON	79th Assembly District
1972	JOSEPH MONTOYA	50th Assembly District
1973	TOM BRADLEY	Mayor of Los Angeles

MINORITY REPRESENTATION

Early in its political life, CLR took the position - which it steadfastly has maintained, sometimes standing alone - that our minority population must determine their own priorities through the election of candidates selected by their respective communities.

In November 1973, that position received unanimous approval by the California Supreme Court. In an editorial (Los Angeles Times 11/30/73) titled FAIRER REPRESENTATION it points out that

"the gerrymandering of Mexican American and black districts is ended, and so old wrongs are redressed."

It is with enormous pride that CLR can boast of its leadership, calling upon the white Anglo community for popular support for minority representation on all levels of government.



CLR's selection was based on the extent of Mexican American community support for their own candidates. We reached consensus that no longer was it appropriate for the white Anglo community to decide the candidate for the minority community, but, rather, to assist in the campaigns to elect candidates selected by the respective minority community. These included:

Richard Alatorre	48th Assembly District
Richard Calderon	Assembly & Senatorial Districts
Peter Chacon	79th Assembly District
Alex Garcia	27th Senatorial District
Joseph Montoya	50th Assembly District
Ralph Ochoa	48th Assembly District
Herman Sillas	State Controller

All but three were elected. However, the splendid campaigns of Calderon, Ochoa and Sillas enhanced the possibility for the others, and still other Chicano candidates in the future.

#### 1971 REAPPORTIONMENT

CLR launched one of its most ambitious statewide campaigns on the issue of re-districting according to the one man, one vote rule. Because of its public pronouncements on behalf of Mexican American representation, CLR was asked by the California Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights to bring together representatives of a cross-section of political, social, labor and religious groups. Purpose was to present evidence of discrimination against Mexican Americans. Disclosures produced shocking proof of such discrimination on every level of government.

CLR played one of the major coalition roles in the state, together with the Coalition for Fair Reapportionment in 1971, an outgrowth of the above conference.

CLR activities on behalf of the re-districting issue include:

- Appearances and presentation of statements before the
- \* Calif Advisory Committee to the US Civil Rights Commission
- \* Assembly Committee on Reapportionment
- \* Senate Committee on Reapportionment
- \* Reinecke Commission on Electoral Reform
- \* California Commission on Democratic Party Reform





annel

68

KVST-TV's PRIMARY PURPOSES AND PROGRAMMING OBJECTIVES

KVST-TV, CHANNEL 68, FCC licensee for Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation, a non profit, tax exempt, public foundation, went on the air in May 1974.

KVST-TV is the nation's first public television station which is oriented to social change through community and public affairs programming. Whereas KVST-TV will not (nor can it legally) propagandize for a given point of view, the channel will present well documented, but often highly controversial, points of view and will place special emphasis on success stories related to social change in

this and other cities. The channel's objective is not merely to inform in greater depth, but to motivate people to involve themselves in the social change process and thus facilitate that process.

Approximately 50% of KVST-TV's programming will address itself to the problems of the disadvantaged community, and the remaining 50% will address itself to the problems of the general community, the nation and the world. KVST-TV also plans to develop and air a regular multi-ethnic, non-violent children's program.

KVST-TV's funding will be primarily by viewer sponsorship. The Foundation also is eligible for and has received funds from HEW, Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Public Broadcasting Service. In 1974, KVST-TV received a grant from the City of Los Angeles and is now requesting funds for 75-76 from the City and County of Los Angeles as well as other local agencies.

KVST-TV's by-laws require that the Board of Directors be composed of socially concerned media professionals and/or persons actively involved in community problem solving, and that ethnic minority representation on the Board be proportional to that of the community as a whole.

GENERAL PROGRAMMING OBJECTIVE

To act as a supportive service for organizations and individuals who are engaged in social movements and problem solving. The emphasis on problem solving is part of a conscious attempt to inspire and motivate the citizenry to overcome a sense of impotence and alienation and to become involved in efforts to improve their condition of life. Involvement refers primarily to involvement with action organizations and secondarily with the station itself.

One of the goals of KVST-TV is to serve as a communications system for organizations to present their programs for viewing by their memberships as well as by the community at large.

(over)





Programming should include only a moderate amount of classical "exposé" or "muckraking" journalism. This should be followed, wherever possible, with presentation of viable courses of corrective action which are related to current efforts of groups that are making substantial contributions in the respective areas of concern.

Above all, KVST-TV proposes to engender a sense of humanism and potency in people to counter the sense of alienation, dehumanization and impotence that characterizes this period. Exposé journalism alone often adds to the despair of a population that is already in an overload condition of injustice, corruption, crime, economic chaos, and environmental abuse.

At all times, KVST-TV intends to practice the highest standards of journalism, i.e. documentation, fairness and forthrightness in its own productions and in the selection of the work of others.

At all times, KVST-TV will strive for ethnic, sexual, etc. balance in its productions teams, except where specific groups request otherwise. All general community productions groups shall be reasonably balanced whenever possible.

### STATISTICS

KVST's two million watts of effective radiated power has the capacity to reach more than ten million people from Santa Barbara to San Diego. In full color range, it has the second largest capability in this area.

### CHARTER MEMBERSHIPS

Rate Structure: A special rate structure for Charter Members is proposed at

\$15	regular membership (40% discount)
10	senior citizen or student
5	disadvantaged areas

Privileges: Charter Members receive special privileges, including film previews, studio audience invitations, discussions after programs, special premiums, etc. Charter Members will belong to an exclusive group numbering only 10,000 and will be offered continuous reduced rates and special considerations as long as they maintain membership in CHANNEL 68.





November 7, 1975

Association of California Public Television Stations  
 P O Box 6  
 Sacramento, California 95801

Attention: Mr. Arthur A. Paul

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to submit the following nominee for the California Public Broadcasting Commission:

Ms Elly Wagner

Elly is a member of the Board of Directors of Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation, licensee for KVST-TV Channel 68; also Coordinator of Government Grants for the station. She is married to Murry Wagner, a retired businessman and free-lance broadcaster (primarily as a narrator of documentary and educational films), has one grown son, and is a Democrat. Former Board Member, Hollywood-Los Feliz Jewish Community Center; past Administrative Secretary, Californians for Liberal Representation, a California non-partisan umbrella organization concerned with electoral and legislative campaigns on a variety of social issues. Also currently on Advisory Board Multi-service Family Center, a non-profit organization in the central city area.

We are delighted that Elly has accepted the nomination since she is uniquely qualified to serve on the Commission. Because of her past experience in the political arena on a national, state and local level, she enjoys mutually respectful relationships with important members of the federal and local governments. For example, when the President's proposed rescission of the EBFP appropriation was in danger of passage, Elly spent a great deal of time and talent in phone and written communication with key members of the California delegation: particularly, Congressmen Phillip Burton and Ed Roybal, and Congresswoman Yvonne Burke, as well as Senators Tunney and Cranston, all of whom respond warmly to Elly's advocacy of certain measures.

likewise on the Goggin's bill. Elly met with legislators in San Francisco and key Democratic leaders in Los Angeles; through her efforts, individual leaders from women's, civil liberties and other groups contacted local members of the Legislature.

Elly Wagner has a keen intelligence and has contributed immeasurably to programming and production ideas. Her special involvement has been in community organizing. She is currently working on proposals for programming with the LA County Commission on Human Relations, Catholic Community Services, American Indian Center, Inc., United Way, Jewish Federation Council, Greater Los Angeles Community Action Agency, and other social services on issues dealing with mental health, drug abuse, crime prevention,



November 7, 1975

juvenile justice, etc. She fortunately has the time and energy to devote to public broadcasting goals, and has been most generous in giving of her splendid efforts.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to nominate our excellent choice for the Commission - a deeply committed and community involved woman, Elly Wagner.

Sincerely,

iy Freedman  
General Manager

iF:jm



To Members of the Board of Directors  
Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation,  
a California Corporation

March 4 1976

It is with deep and very mixed emotions that I write this letter. However, having devoted the last year and a half as a full-time volunteer member of the staff in the capacity of Coordinator of Government Grants I have more than a casual concern about the health of our station KVST. And I am shocked and grieved at the latest turn of events.

I understand that the requirement for KVST to resume on-air operations must be met within a very short time. And since the projected on-air date has been set for July 4th - according to the report made at the last Board meeting as well as a statement made on Channel 4 by an Executive Committee member - KVST will have been a dead issue long before that date.

This imminent death of the nation's most important public broadcasting television station should not have - need not have - happened.

I wish to address myself particularly to the new Board members. I am deeply saddened you never had the opportunity to help build our exciting and unique station. Unfortunately, you were presented with only a partial and distorted set of facts without an understanding of the history of a few, and particularly one, of the Board members.

Ten weeks have passed since the station was ordered by Washington to be closed temporarily until staff grievances were settled and staff could be re-assembled to operate Channel 68 responsibly.

On January 3rd (a few days after closing) we saw the sorry spectacle of three Board members and their friends standing in front of our closed station, carrying picket signs and cat-calling before tv cameras "Open it up!"

Now, ten weeks later, these same Board members who wrested control on January 3rd have not been able to "open it up." They have neither the resources, the background, the knowledge, the program nor the staff - let alone the community support - to "open it up."

The business of running a public television station is a highly complex, multi-faceted operation. Especially so, with a new station, a new concept, and a constant struggle to attract new sources of financing. There are two major sources of funding for a young station: government grants and building membership: direct mail, telethons, on-air appeals, etc.

The policy of VSTF is set by its Board of Directors under the guidelines established by its By Laws. The Executive Committee is





charged with conducting the important business of the station between Board meetings. It should provide creative leadership in times of stress - especially in financial crises. It never did. By and large, we now have an excellent, representative Board of Directors, a credit to any public broadcasting station. If left to its own resources, to function constructively in accordance with revised By Laws, we could have completed the magnificent task that was well on its way to a glorious future prior to the chaos which began on June 26th.

You have only to review the factual Report of the General Manager, Hy Freedman (10/27/75) to see the enormous strides KVST was making. (Copy was mailed to you on that date.)

You have only to review the State of the Station Report by the Director of Development, Leslie Parrish (12/20/75) to take full cognizance of the exciting proposals for 1976 for membership growth and fund-raising: direct mail, telethons, luncheons, dinners, concerts, government grants, etc.

You have only to be apprised of the high esteem and growing confidence with which KVST was held by city, county, state and all federal agencies. Representatives of HEW and CPB lauded our efforts on behalf of the long-range funding bill recently adopted. Our many friends in the State Legislature were very supportive of the new public broadcasting financing law which provides a new source of funds for all pbs stations in California.

We had a brilliant future!. What happened?

Had you worked with our entire staff - engineering, technical, production, administrative - day in and day out, month in and month out - you would have observed a rare group of people. Despite weeks and weeks of not being paid they evidenced a dedication to building KVST seldom seen in today's commercialism.

The straw that broke their patient backs occurred at the December 20th meeting which they attended to discuss their grievances (see 12/12/75 and 12/19/75 statements from staff). Elections were scheduled for new officers as well as new Executive and By Laws committees.

When, for the third time (previously scheduled on July 24th and October 16th agendas) elections were again postponed, the staff virtually lost all hope of working for a serious, reconciled Board and Executive Committee who, hopefully, could initiate renewed confidence in the financial community and, hopefully, the staff then could look to payment of their \$27,000 back pay salary (recently reduced from \$40,000!). Nor did the staff see any hope of having their demands met by a dreary repetition of dilatory tactics and name-calling.

The rest is history which is provided in the Chronology of Events Leading to Closing the Station, Attachment "A", included in the packet of statements you received at either the January 2nd or 3rd meetings you attended.



Because of the tragic loss of KVST to the community, it might be useful - especially for the new Board members - to ask yourselves some basic questions:

#### Board actions.

Why did the previous Chairman, an attorney, permit gross violations of the By Laws, no less than sixteen in number!? Why did he allow inflammatory and endless irrelevant discussions so that at no Board meeting since June 26th were agenda items completed? Why were elections of officers not held for two years when they had been scheduled on the agendas of three Board meetings? How can the present officers and Board of Directors conduct the business of the corporation when all but two members are seated out of compliance with the By Laws?

#### Executive Committee actions.

In November 1975, when the General Manager urgently notified the previous Chairman of an imminent financial problem, causing the Chairman to call an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee, why was nothing done by the Executive Committee to relieve the crisis? The Executive Committee leisurely decided to meet again in another two weeks, and then again in another week. Our President Leslie Parrish related the urgency time and time again: that the staff was demanding back salaries for some \$40,000; that they could hold out no longer. The only action taken at those meetings were demands by Ruiz for endless written reports! Why did he and other members of the Executive Committee (other than Leslie and myself who raised \$15,500) refuse to take emergency measures to relieve staff pressures?

#### Staff.

After ten weeks of the new administration, why isn't the station on the air? Why is there no responsible staff to conduct the operations of KVST? No business manager, no station manager, no engineering, production, traffic, graphics, development, public relations, publicity, secretarial, community organizer, government grants, membership?

And finally, please ask yourselves just what was in the minds of the few, the very few, who took advantage of an admittedly very difficult, very sensitive situation... who also took advantage of your lack of information about all the facts involved.

For those of you who have been involved in organizations previously, you might recognize the diversionary pattern: take a set of circumstances or issues, twist it to your needs (this time the false claim of "racism" was used), divert attention away from the real issue (in this case it was a financial crisis), use inflammatory language and accusations, repeat them at every opportunity so that doubts and fears are raised, and then move in at the most vulnerable moment to destroy the project (in this case it required disposing of the most qualified and experienced management). Finally, after the destruction, to express remorse such as "we all make mistakes....".



Before the end of 1975 KVST was alive and growing, to be sure with enormous problems to be worked out, all of which our entire staff was prepared to deal with in good faith, with a vigorous new Chairman and a creative, resourceful Executive Committee.

Today you have a moribund station, with one or two people at the helm who continue to distort the situation totally.

As you may gather, this agonizing experience has brought deep pain and anger and sadness. So many dreams and hopes and hard, hard work - to be turned into a cauldron of hate and despair by - whom and for what purpose?

*Elly Wagner*

Elly Wagner



2401 Moreno Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90039

March 29 1976

Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation  
1136 North Highland Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90038

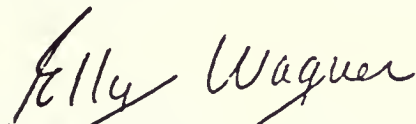
Attention: Sue Embry, Secretary-Treasurer

It is with the deepest regret that I hereby tender my resignation from the Board of Directors of VSTF for the following reasons:

1. Although the present Officers and Executive Committee have held office since January 3, 1976 KVST is still inoperative and off the air;
2. There is no apparent, viable program set forth by the new Administration for financial responsibility in the foreseeable future;
3. Although I had previously served successfully as a volunteer Coordinator of Government Grants, my services have not been sought even though I had contacted the new President on the night of his election (1/3/76) and offered my assistance.

I therefore must assume that the same divisions and dissensions which brought about the tragic ousting of the previous responsible management continue to beset the Corporation.

Sincerely,



Elly Wagner  
Member, Board of Directors

copy: Ms Sue Embry, Secy-Treas  
VSTF  
1566 Curran Street  
LA 90026





## INDEX -- Eleanor Wagner

- Abraham, Ruth, iii-v, 60, 70, 78  
 Abzug, Bella, 61  
 Albert, Marge, 77-78  
 Albert, Paul, 68, 77  
 Allen, Steve, 69  
 American Federation of Labor (AFL), 10, 21, 25, 28, 30, 38-39  
 Anderson, Glenn, 29  
 Anderson, Hugh, 70  
 Aragon, Manuel and Trini, 74  
 Arriola, Ralph, 95
- Berman, Averill, 17, 18  
 Berman, Howard, 67, 70  
 Berman, Jack, 58, 79, 86, 99  
 Boardman, True, 7  
 Bolling, Richard, 91  
 blacks. See Negroes  
 Borough, Madeleine, 23-24  
 Borough, Reuben W., 23-24, 27, 32-33, 50, 54  
 Bradley, Thomas, 71, 78, 92-94, 104  
 Brathwaite, Yvonne, 71-73  
 Brody, Marvin, 74  
 Brown, Edmund G., Sr. (Pat), 55  
 Brown, George, Jr., 63, 67-69  
 Brown, Willie, 71  
 Burford, James, 22-24, 110-111  
 Burns, Hugh, 36, 40  
 Burton, Philip, 71-72, 84-85
- Cadwell, David, 70  
 Calderon, Richard, 74-75, 86  
 California Democratic Council (CDC), 46, 53, 62-65, 72-73, 84, 89-90, 100  
 California Legislative Conference, 22-61, appendix  
 California legislature, 29-31, 38-49, 54, 87-88  
 Californians for Liberal Representation, vi-ix, 67-103, appendix  
 campaigns. See election campaigns  
 candidate endorsement, 71-76, 83-84, 87-89, 92-94, 97, 99-101  
 Carnap, Rudolph, 69  
 Carstens, Arthur, vi-viii, 69, 79, 84, 96, 102  
 Casady, Simon, 89  
 Caughey, John, 69  
 Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 84



- Central Labor Council (Los Angeles), viii, 25  
 civil liberties, 29-30, 71  
 civil rights, 29-30, 71  
 coalitions, political theory of, 46, 49, 53, 71, 81-82, 90, 92, 95-96, 99-101, 104  
 Collins, George, 49  
 Committee of 1000, 67  
 communism, 30, 32-34, 36, 55  
 community organization, 95, 101, 104. See also coalitions, theory of  
 Condon, Robert, 29  
 chicanos. See Mexican-Americans  
 Conference on Community Involvement, 95  
 Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO), 7, 17, 18, 21-22, 25, 34, 38  
 Connelly, Philip, 34  
 Conway, Jack, 95  
 Cooper, Clara, 79  
 Corbett, Catherine, 28-29, 31, 41, 43, 50  
 Cowell, George, 19-20  
 Cranston, Alan, 73, 104  
 Crum, Bartley, 23  
 Cunningham, David, 86
- Dancers' Federation, 6-9  
 Dare, Danny, 7  
 Davenport, Edward, 54  
 Davis, Grace Montanez, 74, 78  
 Dellums, Ron, 89  
 Democratic party, 31-33, 72, 101. See also California Democratic Council  
 Despol, John, 34, 36  
 Docter, Robert, 75-76  
 Doran, Mark, 69  
 Douglas, Melvyn, 7, 9  
 Dunleavy, Hal, 46
- Edgecombe, Phyllis, 70  
 election campaign financing, 20, 44, 51-52, 71-72, 89-90, 93  
 election campaigns, local:  
   1965, Board of Education, Los Angeles, 75-76  
   1967, Board of Education, Los Angeles, 74-75  
   1969, mayoralty, Los Angeles, 78, 92-94  
   1973, mayoralty, Los Angeles, 94  
   See also Mexican-American representation in government and politics  
 election campaigns, statewide and national:  
   1946, 19-21  
   1948, 25  
   1962, 67-69, 71  
   1964, 85  
   1968, 89-90  
   1970, 71, 83-84, 90  
   1971, 87-88



election reform, 91  
Eliscu, Edward, 7  
Elliot, Edward, 29  
Erb, Leah, 42  
Evans, John, 49

Flores, Joe, 64  
Friedman, Miriam, 41  
Friends Committee on Legislation, 41  
Fry, John, 35

Garcia, Alex, 87  
Glenn, Eleanor, 48  
Grange, The, 35  
Green, Howard, 70

Haggerty, C.J. (Neil), 28, 30, 35-36  
Hatcher, Richard, 92-94  
Hawkins, Augustus, 29  
Healey, Dorothy, 33-34, 36  
Hollister, Miles, 69  
Hollywood Bowl, 6  
Hollywood Theater Alliance, 9  
Hyun, David, 45-46, 65

Independent Progressive Party (IPP), 25-27, 35-36, 39  
International Association of Machinists, 35  
International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, 35, 52  
International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, 41  
Irvine, G.F., 24, 31, 49-50

Jackson, Esther, 86  
Jewish Community Centers, Beverly-Fairfax, 17, 19, 20  
Jones, George Bonnie, 101  
Jones, James Edward, 75

KVST-TV, 47, 60, 104-107  
Kalish, Samuel, viii-ix, 79  
Keating, Edward, 89  
Kefauver, Senator Estes, 71-72, 84  
Kelleher, Kay, 20



Kennedy, Robert, 90  
 Kenny, Robert, 23, 48-49, 55  
 Kugler, Fred, 43

labor unions, viii, 6-7, 10-12, 21, 23-24, 28, 31, 34-35, 38, 41, 47-48,  
 52, 74-76, 90-91, 95-96. See also specific unions by title  
 legislature and legislators. See California legislature  
 Levering, Cricket, 69  
 Levin, Irwin, 67-68  
 Lewis, Joe C., 29, 31-32  
Liberal Democrat, 67, 77  
 lobbying, 28-31, 38-48, 83-84  
 loyalty oath, 35-39  
 Lozano, John, 70  
 Ludwig, Victor, 75  
 Lusher, Bernard, 12

Major, Paul, 33, 48-49, 54-55  
 Manes, Hugh, 70  
 Manes, Sheila, 77-78  
 Marcus, Ann, 60  
 McCarran Act, 45-46  
 McCarthy, Eugene, 90  
 McMillan, Lester, 29  
 McNitt, Rollin, 24  
 McWilliams, Carey, 53

media:

television. See KVST-TV  
 Mexican-American Political Association (MAPA), 74, 87  
 Mexican-Americans, 64, 93, 95-97, 102, 106-107  
 representation in government and politics, viii, 73-76, 80-83, 85-88.  
See also race relations  
 Meyers, Henry, 7  
 Miller, George, Jr., 29  
 Monroe, Eason, 39, 70  
 Montoya, Joseph, 88  
 Motion Picture Democratic Committee, 7, 9  
 motion picture industry, 5-12  
 Mundt-Nixon bill, 38-45  
 Murphy, Raymond, 69  
 musicians, 1, 3, 12-13

National Citizens' Political Action Committee (NCPAC), 17, 19-21  
 Nava, Julian, 71, 75, 83, 106  
 Negroes, 64, 84, 93, 95-97, 102, 106-107  
 representation in government and politics, viii-ix, 73-76, 80-83, 85-88  
See also race relations





New Democratic Coalition (NDC), 92

O'Connell, John, 71

Office of Price Administration, U.S. (OPA), 17-18

Orans, Alice, 24

Ostrow, Senil, 70

Pacht, Jerry, 67-69, 71

Parks, Perry, 78

Parrish, Leslie, 105-106

Patterson, Ellis, 19-21

peace issues, 21-22, 31-32, 36, 68-69, 71, 85, 89-90

Peck, James, 70

Peevey, Michael, 84

Pendleton, Norman, 46

Perez, Eduardo, 74

Phillips, Gifford, 68, 78

politics and humanism, 101-102, 107

Pratt, Glenn, 12

public utilities, 47-48

race relations, 54, 64, 95, 102, 106-107. See also Mexican-Americans;

Negroes

Rafferty, Max, 73

Railroad Brotherhoods, 24

Reagan, Ronald, 89-91

reapportionment, 82-83, 88

Re-Evaluation Education (RE), 101

Riles, Wilson, 71, 83

Ripston, Ramona, 60

Roberti, David, 87

Ronquillo, Manuel, 96

Rosenthal, William, 49

Roybal, Edward, 54, 67-69, 71

Ruiz, Raul, 106

Rumford, Byron, 30

Saylin, Mary, 81

Schrade, Paul, 34, 96

Screen Office Employees Guild, 10-12

Serling, Rod, 70

Shapiro, Victor, 19-20, 51-52

Siegel, Joel, 84

Sieroty, Alan, 96-97



Sillas, Herman, 83  
 Southland Jewish Organization, 52  
 Steinberg, Lionel, 69

Taft-Hartley Act, 23-24, 36  
 Tapia, Abe, 82  
 tax reform, 184  
 Tenner, Hallie, 48  
 Tenney, Jack, 36  
 Terrazas, Mauricio, 74  
 Townsend Clubs, 25, 46  
 Truman Doctrine, 31-32  
 Tunney, John, 104  
 Tuttle, Frederick (Rick), 67

Un-American Activities Committee, California State Senate, 54  
 United Auto Workers, viii, 74, 76, 84, 95-96  
 United Electrical Workers, 35, 38  
 University of California:  
   at Los Angeles, Institute of Industrial Relations, viii  
 University Religious Conference, 84  
 Unruh, Jesse, 83

Van Deerlin, Lionel, 71  
 Varela, Del, 74  
 Vasconcellos, John, 101  
 Vietnam, 85, 89, 92  
 Viewer Sponsored Television Foundation. See KVST-TV

Wagner, Daniel, 52, 57, 64  
 Wagner, Eleanor:  
   as businesswoman, 65-66  
   education, 3, 7-8, 16  
   family, 1-17  
   religion, 15-16  
   as secretary, 10-12, 16, 57-58, 77-79  
   self evaluation, 55, 57-58, 100-102, 107  
 Wagner, Michael Dan (Murry), 43, 63-65, 76-78, 106  
 Waldeck, Louis, 19  
 Walter, Earl, 50-51  
 Walter, Mildred, 50-51  
 Warren, Earl, 29  
 Watts Labor Action Committee, viii  
 Waxman, Henry, 67, 71, 88



Webber, Georges and Marjorie, 41  
Weiner, Maurice, 59, 75, 78, 92, 99  
Wilkinson, Frank, 54  
Windmuller, Marshall, 67  
Winnett, Tom, 67  
Win the Peace Committee, 22  
Wirin, A.L., 69  
Wolf, Joseph, 70  
women, 6, 22, 36-37, 48, 78, 105  
Women for Legislative Action, 37  
women in politics, 36-37, 58-61  
    attitudes toward, 54-58  
    husband's support, 56-57, 60-61  
    in government, 61  
Women's Committee to Defeat the Burns-Tenney bills, 36-37

Yates, Herbert, 72-73  
Yorty, Sam, 84, 93

Ziffren, Paul, 69, 91



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